DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 238 508 JC 840 040

AUTHOR Hans, David R.; And Others
TITLE Joining the Ranks: Partnership in Rehabilitation.
INSTITUTION California Community Colleges, Sacramento. Office of the Chancellor.; California State Dept. of Education, Sacramento.
SPONS AGENCY Department of Education, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 81
GRANT CC-3-0-776
NOTE 80p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Counseling; Community Colleges; *Cooperative Education; Developmental Studies Programs; *Job Training; *Physical Disabilities; Program Descriptions; School Business Relationship; Student Evaluation; Student Personnel Services; Student Placement; Student Recruitment; Two Year Colleges; *Two Year College Students; *Work Experience Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Vista College CA

ABSTRACT

The vocational counseling and training process described in this manual has been used successfully with disabled students at Vista College. As prefatory material notes the Vista College model is exceptional in that it begins with conditional job offers from a specific private employer and then works backward to establish the necessary training standards, admission requirements, assessment activities, and recruitment procedures; and that it focuses on developing short-term, intensive training activities designed specifically for disabled students. Chapter I introduces Vista College's disabled student population; program components, results, and operational structure; and program development and administration. Chapter II explains the components of the business-education-labor partnership, focusing on the conditional job offers, the college and its relationship with the private sector, and the role of unions. Chapter III considers training and placement strategies, providing information on programs such as roofer's pre-apprenticeship, custodial and postal services, and intercept operator. Chapter IV reviews initial student contacts and the recruitment, intake, and referral processes; chapter V describes the program's assessment activities. Concluding chapters consider disability benefits and training, developmental activities, and supportive services such as employer education, student support, and post-placement services. (LAL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED238508

Joining the Ranks

Partnership in Rehabilitation

David R. Hans
Lynn A. Whitmore
Maureen Knightly

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
L. A. Whitmore
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☒ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

JC 840 040

VISTA COLLEGE • BERKELEY • CALIFORNIA
Peralta Community College District
Design by Davis Graduer

2

JOINING THE RANKS
Partnership in Rehabilitation

David R. Hans
Lynn A. Whitmore
Maureen Knightly

Developed and disseminated pursuant to
Project No. CC-3-0-776 under Subpart 3 of P.L. 94-482
for
Chancellor's Office, California Community Colleges
and
California Department of Education

This project was supported in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement should be inferred.

1981

PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tom Luzod (Co-Chairman), Assistant Manager - Marketing
Pacific Telephone, San Jose

Owen Marron (Co-Chairman), Placement Specialist
Human Resources Development Institute, AFL/CIO, Oakland

Douglas Clark, District Management Assistant
State Department of Rehabilitation, Oakland

Marcos Contreras, Coordinator of Instruction
Disabled Student Services, Vista College

Charlcie Grasser, Manager of Office Services
Kaiser Aluminum Corporation, Oakland

Beverly Hammer, Enabler
Disabled Student Services, Vista College

David Hans, Project Director
Vocational Programs for Disabled Students
Vista College, Berkeley

Crystal Hishida, Rehabilitation Specialist
County of Alameda Personnel Department, Oakland

Maureen Knightly, Assessment Counselor
Disabled Student Services, Vista College

Sue Moore, Rehabilitation Director
Goodwill Industries, Oakland

Betty Rhoades, Enabler
College of Alameda, Alameda

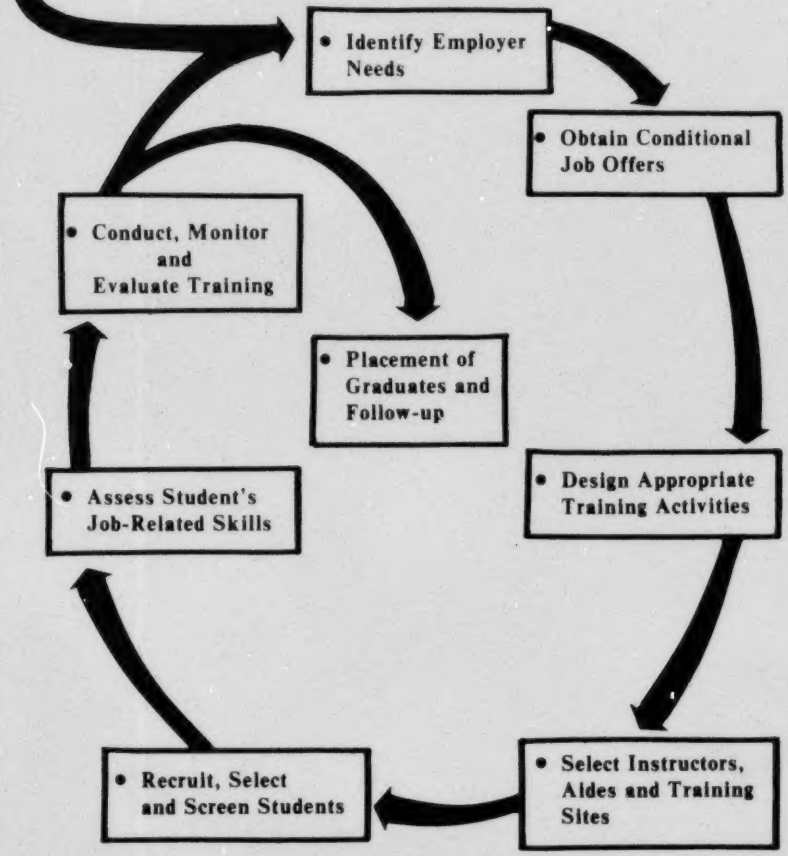
John Rodriguez, Employment Counselor
State Employment Development Department, Berkeley

John Velton, Program Supervisor
State Department of Rehabilitation, Berkeley

George Weaver, Handicap Program Coordinator
U. S. Postal Service, Oakland

STEPS TO ESTABLISH A PROGRAM

- **Obtain Administrative Support**
  - Select or Reassign Staff
  - Identify Funding Base
  - Agree to Develop Short-term, Innovative Training Classes
- **Identify and Select Active Advisory Committee Members From Local Businesses and Labor Organizations**
- **Establish Advisory Committee Goals**
- **Develop Leads and Contact Employers**


Identify Employer Needs
Obtain Conditional Job Offers
Design Appropriate Training Activities
Select Instructors, Aides and Training Sites
Recruit, Select and Screen Students
Assess Student's Job-Related Skills
Conduct, Monitor and Evaluate Training
Placement of Graduates and Follow-up

Preface

This manual is a step-by-step description of a vocational counseling and training process that has been used successfully with disabled men and women enrolled at Vista College, one of the Peralta Community Colleges in the San Francisco Bay Area. The description covers every aspect of this process, from recruitment and assessment through pre-employment and training activities to actual job placement.

Many of the vocational counseling services we provide for disabled students at Vista are not unique; you probably offer similar services already. However, our overall vocational counseling approach is exceptional in two ways: 1) we begin with conditional job offers from a specific private employer and then work backward to establish the necessary training standards, admission requirements, assessment activities, and recruitment procedures, and 2) we support many disabled students who are enrolled in conventional occupational training programs at Vista and other colleges in our district, but our primary focus is developing short-term, intensive training activities that are designed specifically for disabled students. The conditional job offers we obtain from employers are directly related to these short-term training activities. Our goal is to place all graduates of our carefully structured training programs into pre-selected jobs.

We realize that you, the reader, may be an occupational dean, a director of counseling, a vocational counselor, or an enabler for disabled students. Only you can gauge whether our type of approach would benefit students in your college and community. The chart on the opposite page outlines the steps necessary to establish such a program, and the rest of the manual explores each step in much greater detail. Additionally, we've included descriptions of project activities and operational requirements, practical suggestions and precautions, and illustrative case studies. We hope you will be able to use our experiences to strengthen and expand the vocational counseling services you now provide for disabled students.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I **Introduction** 9
Our Students 9
Components 10
Results 12
Operational Structure 14
Final Notes Regarding Program Development and Administration 17

II **The Business-Education-Labor Partnership** 19
Conditional Job Offers 19
The College 21
Private Sector Relationships 23
The Union Connection 25
Summary 27

III **Training and Placement Strategies** 29
Roofer's Pre-Apprenticeship 31
Custodial Services 33
Postal Service Mail Handler and Clerk 35
Intercept Operator 37
Plans for the Future 38
College Administrative Support 39
Summary 40

IV **Initial Student Contacts** 41
Recruitment 41
Intake Interviews 42
Referral 43
Summary 44

V **Assessment Activities** 45
Philosophy 45
Assessment Interview 48
General Task Performance 49
Developmental Classes 50
Vocational Experimentation 51
Job-Related Skill Tests 52
Monthly Conferences 54
Standardized Tests 55
Summary 55

VI **Disability Benefits and Training** 57
Changes in Benefit Regulations 58
Implications for Counseling 61
Summary 62

VII **Developmental Activities** 63
GED Preparation 64
Math for the Blind 65
Summary 66

VIII **Supportive Services** 67
Employer Education 67
Student Support 70
Post-Placement 74
Summary 75

Appendix
List of Standardized Tests 77

Chapter One
INTRODUCTION

The San Francisco Bay Area offers a complex network of resources for the disabled. The lure of California, combined with proximity to nationally recognized service programs such as the Center for Independent Living (CIL), the Deaf Counseling Advocacy and Referral Association (DCARA), and more than 60 other local social service agencies, has attracted large numbers of disabled persons to this area.

In spite of the fact that there is an extensive network of community social services to support the disabled population, there are a number of gaps in the local service delivery continuum. The training and placement approach developed at Vista is based on two major premises:

1. effective programs that train and place disabled adults in private sector employment are limited in availability, and
2. many disabled individuals who lack self-confidence and clearly defined employment goals are not being served by existing vocational programs.

We feel that many disabled adults have been labeled as "unfeasible for employment" by social services agencies, primarily because of ignorance of the job market. These disabled adults have not had enough work experience or preparation, and they are totally ineffective at marketing themselves to prospective employers. These adults — hard to train, hard to work with, and hard to employ — defined Vista's vocational training and placement approach.

Our Students

We work only with a particular segment of the disabled population. When they come to us, our students generally have low self-confidence and minimal ability as measured by conventional standardized assessment techniques. They *want to work* — to be self-sufficient and productive members of society — but often they can't even begin to identify an employment goal. They *assume* they cannot compete even for unskilled jobs. They are often *naive* about their employment potential and the actual working conditions of both skilled and

unskilled jobs. Some students are *afraid* of losing their supplemental disability benefits by enrolling in a training/work program that might not be successful. In addition, they have a physical and/or mental disability: blindness, deafness, dyslexia, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, developmental disabilities, or a variety of orthopedic limitations.

Not all disabled individuals are naive, inexperienced, and fearful about employment, and it must be emphasized that we are referring to a special part of this population in describing our program. Our students possess the same wide range of abilities and potential as the general disabled population, but they also possess expectations and assumptions that limit their abilities and potential. They are special, and various elements of our vocational counseling program were developed because we recognized that these adults need a powerful combination of practical skill training and psychological support.

In the last three years, we have worked with over 600 adults who have a variety of physical, mental, and/or emotional disabilities. Some of these adults have disabilities that are not readily visible, while others are obviously and often multiply disabled. Student ages range from 17 to 65; academic skill levels range from very poor to excellent; motivation to work is generally very high. Students are referred to us by Department of Rehabilitation counselors, by Vista College counselors, and by our professional contacts in the rehabilitation field.

Program Components

Our primary objective is to place disabled adults in competitive, highly-paid, private sector jobs. Conventional training and placement strategies are successful with many disabled adults, but our students need a special combination of skill training, exposure to the work world, and psychological support. Consequently, our program includes most of the conventional vocational counseling components such as recruitment, assessment, referral to developmental activities, pre-employment training, skills training, and post-placement counseling. However, both the content and the sequence of many of these conventional components have been modified to fit the needs of our students.

The special aspects of our program components include:

- an active advisory committee composed of representatives of major private employers, (Chapter 2)

unions and community-based agencies who are willing to help us develop jobs and appropriate training activities for disabled adults;

- conditional job offers from private sector employers for graduates of our training programs; (Chapter 2)
- formal and informal activities designed to sensitize employers and unions to the employment potential of disabled workers; (Chapter 8)
- placement strategies that allow students to demonstrate their skills on actual work duties, instead of, or in addition to, the traditional application and interview process; (Chapter 3)
- training activities that are developed by employers and college staff and are taught by experienced practitioners; (Chapter 3)
- assessment techniques that evaluate performance of job-related skills instead of general abilities; (Chapter 5)
- easy entry into any of the program's preemployment or training activities, as long as successful exit requires student demonstration of specific behaviors and attitudes; (Chapter 4)
- supportive activities designed to increase the personal confidence of adults, to help them be more comfortable with taking risks, and to change their personal assumptions about the insurmountable physical and attitudinal barriers to employment. (Chapter 8)

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of developing and operating our program is the fact that we obtain conditional job offers and plan special placement procedures before we recruit students or offer any training. This process contains both advantages and disadvantages for us and our students. The process is advantageous for students since they know that good jobs are waiting for graduates of our carefully structured training programs. Successful placements are satisfying, but the process is somewhat lengthened for us because we cannot train or place anyone until we've obtained job offers and planned special recruitment and training procedures with employers.

This initial planning stage may take from six months to a year of intensive effort. Conventional placement programs for the disabled consistently place a small number of students each month or semester; our model sacrifices quick, single job referrals for a large number of placements once the program is fully operational. We believe that the quantity and quality of our placements justifies this slow and careful planning process.

Project Results

In the last three years we have learned much about what kinds of counseling, assessment, training, and employment strategies will work with our type of clientele. Our counseling process, special support services, and direct relationship with employers and unions were developed by trial and error. Our approach has been successful: 172 students have been placed in regular competitive jobs; 224 students have participated in training; over 140 additional students have been referred to other college-sponsored educational and/or training programs, with the help of conventional Lanterman-funded special services (e.g., readers and brailled tests for the blind, interpreters for the deaf, transportation assistance, note-takers, tutors and instructional assistants).

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

	78/79	79/80	80/81
Placement	39	59	74
Vocational Classes	59	76	89
Developmental Classes	218	321	422

- Above chart represents duplicated counts as some students participate in more than one phase of the project.

The following brief case studies do not represent all the different types of students and problems that we have worked with, but they do offer a general idea of our student population, counseling approach, and outcomes.

We feel that we have accomplished our primary objective — the placement of disabled adults who want to work in competitive, unsubsidized employment. The success of our project has been due in large measure to the development and adaptation of five special occupational programs designed specifically to train disabled adults and place them in pre-selected jobs:

CASE STUDIES

- Rich, a 24-year-old man with epilepsy, had been looking for work intermittently for over three years when a Vista counselor referred him to us. Rich had only worked part-time or seasonally; he was very unsure of himself and so sensitive about being labeled "disabled" that he had never applied for services from the State Department of Rehabilitation. He usually failed miserably in job interview situations; however, his excellent work habits and learning ability were obvious in our roofer's pre-apprenticeship program. Now he's earning $7/hour as an apprentice roofer, and he can expect to earn $25,000 annually when he completes his apprenticeship in about four years.
- Fred was 30 years old when we first interviewed him, and had been blind since high school. He had been trained as an auto mechanic in Los Angeles but wanted to change jobs after he moved to the Bay Area. Since he could not settle on a new employment objective, rehabilitation department counselors said they couldn't help him. After several interviews with us, it was clear that he needed to be presented with employment choices. He called us very persistently for job leads, and we referred him to our intercept operator (Pacific Telephone) pre-employment program as soon as it was available. He's now working for the Pacific Telephone Company earning $201.50 per week.
- Phil lives in a special residential living facility for disabled adults and had worked in the mobile unit of a sheltered workshop for several years. Even though he was capable of performing complex custodial services, his mental retardation and lack of self-confidence severely limited his ability to verbalize his skills. Phil enrolled in our custodial services pre-employment class, which was taught by a skilled custodian at the Oakland Labor Temple. Local employers were invited to visit this class and identify prospective employees by observing their performance on actual work tasks. Phil is now employed as a full member of the Service Employees International Union at $6/hour.

- ***Intercept operator,*** developed in cooperation with personnel from the Pacific Telephone Company and the Communication Workers of America;
- ***Postal service mail handler and clerk,*** in conjunction with the Mail Handlers Union and personnel from the Oakland Main Post Office;
- ***Custodian,*** planned and taught in coordination with experienced staff from Local 18 of the Service Employees International Union;
- ***Pre-apprentice roofer,*** taught by the apprenticeship coordinator of the Roofer's Union Local 81;
- ***Word processor,*** a program offered by another college in our district and adapted to accommodate blind students.

These orientation, pre-employment, and training classes serve three functions in our project. They are *career exploration experiences* for the students who are unaware of the work duties and work environments of specific jobs; they give participants a chance to *learn and demonstrate marketable work skills;* and they are *directly linked to placement* in regular, competitive jobs. Ideally, we would prefer to have a larger, broader selection of these types of classes so that clients could have a more diverse range of occupations from which to choose. We are currently expanding our "job menu" through contacts with additional employers.

Operational Structure

This project is only one of the programs for the disabled offered by Vista College. Vista's Services for the Disabled unit is administratively located in the Office of Instruction rather than in Student Services. A typical array of student support services are funded by Lanterman excess cost allocations: e.g., career counseling, readers, interpreters, transportation assistance, individual tutors, and instructional aides. However, this unit also develops, sponsors, and manages many instructional activities designed specifically for disabled students: e.g., classes in drama, physical education, independent living, wheelchair repair, and how to make electronic aids. The intent is to offer supportive services and direct instructional services that can be used as a point of entry into college activities. Many disabled students served by this unit would not ordinarily take advantage of postsecondary education.

The following sections describe the personnel, funding base, and administrative support system necessary to start a vocational counseling and placement program like the one operated by Vista College:

Personnel. This project needs the full-time assignment of two professionals who have a particular combination of skills: a person with a social services/educational background who also has developed or is willing to develop effective private sector employment contacts, and a person who has good vocational assessment and counseling skills. It is very helpful if these two people — a program developer and a vocational counselor — have worked specifically with disadvantaged or disabled adults.

The current project director and program developer has a M.A. in education and an undergraduate degree in psychology. Prior to starting this program at Vista, he operated the Mobile Services Unit, a special component of an Alameda County sheltered workshop which eventually moved over 50 disabled clients (primarily mentally retarded) out of a sheltered working environment and into a variety of private sector jobs. This move was accomplished by successfully bidding on service contracts (e.g., bicycle repair, hauling, janitorial, and grounds maintenance) for disabled clients from private employers such as the General Electric Company, Shasta Beverages, and the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory. Those positive private sector experiences resulted in good personal contacts and pilot-tested the validity of the conditional job offer concept.

The project's assessment specialist has an M.S. in industrial psychology. Prior to joining the Vista Staff, she had been a vocational counselor and instructor with the East Bay Skills Center, a CETA training facility operated by the Peralta Community College District. At the Skills Center she was responsible for administering standardized aptitude and skill tests used to determine training eligibility. Her assessment experiences with disadvantaged CETA applicants convinced her that conventional general assessment techniques often eliminated potentially successful applicants from training. Her Vista activities have focused on identifying and developing job-related skill and aptitude assessment strategies.

Other support personnel involved in the project include a half-time secretary and several hourly instructional aides and tutors. Production of this manual required the services of a writer/editor.

Funding Base. Primary start-up expenses for the project were the salaries of the director, assessment specialist, and half-time secretary, plus office-associated expenses for space, telephones, supplies, and a typewriter. The first-year budget also included approximately $10,000 for travel expenses and special assessment and curriculum materials. For the first two years, project costs were supported primarily by VEA Subpart 3 grants. During the project's second and third years, however, the college invested a portion of its instructional budget and Lanterman funds to pay for assessment personnel, training equipment, additional counseling when necessary, instructional aides, and training instructors.

State apportionment (ADA) money has been a consistent but small part of the project's funding base. Project activities generate ADA from student enrollment in general college classes and in special project classes. ADA funds associated with project activities become part of the college's operating budget and are allocated for special project-related activities. Because the project is only partially supported by the ADA it generates, project staff have given high priority to finding outside funds for specific training components. Support for this kind of training and placement program is available through Vocational Education Act funds (10% is set aside for the disabled), California Worksite Education and Training Act (CWETA) projects, the Private Industry Councils (PIC), and private foundations. As public funds to support education and training become even more difficult to find, these funding agencies and programs will be especially supportive of training programs that have a direct link to private sector placements. It is anticipated that all of the project's administrative and instructional costs will be supported eventually by a broad-based combination of general apportionment funds, Lanterman excess cost funds, and a variety of non-public revenue sources.

Administrative support system. Three internal administrative and organizational factors facilitated the development of the project's counseling approach and training activities:

1. *Strong support from the college's Dean of Instruction and President.* Both of these administrators encouraged grant-writing activities and fully supported the project during its planning and development phase. In a period of fiscal uncertainty, these administrators approved the budget requests necessary to develop and support project activities.

2. *Close link between the Office of Instruction and services for disabled students.* The Dean of Instruction who supervised this project helped to reduce the paperwork required to start and schedule new classes, credential and hire private sector instructors, and hire and train instructional aides. The continued link with the Office of Instruction certainly expedites the planning and organization of new training programs.
3. *Vista's capability to develop and offer non-traditional learning activities.* The classroom and on-the-job experiences offered in conjunction with this project are unconventional in that they are short-term and/or intensive experiences that don't begin and end according to a semester schedule. They also use a variety of teaching and learning techniques, with heavy emphasis on experiential learning. Administrative and instructional staff at Vista are accustomed to organizing learning in flexible ways. The average approval time for a new course is two months, and many courses begin and end at different times each semester in unusual locations, and use a combination of teaching and learning strategies: e.g., lectures, discussions, programmed learning, supervised experiential learning, and independent study.

Final Notes Regarding Program Development and Administration

In many respects Vista is especially suited to operate a vocational training and placement program like the one described in this manual. The college's existing community connections and flexible instructional procedures certainly encouraged the development of a good working partnership between college staff, union officials, and private sector representatives. However, most community colleges have long-standing community contacts and the capability to develop flexible instructional procedures. *The crucial ingredient is institutional commitment.* The administrative, instructional, and counseling staff of an institution must be willing to invest the personnel time and minimal budget required to start a program similar to the one described here. Basic start-up requirements include:

- assignment of two professional staff members (project developer and vocational counselor), either by releasing two existing staff or by adding externally-funded staff;
- allocation of approximately $5,000 for initial assessment and

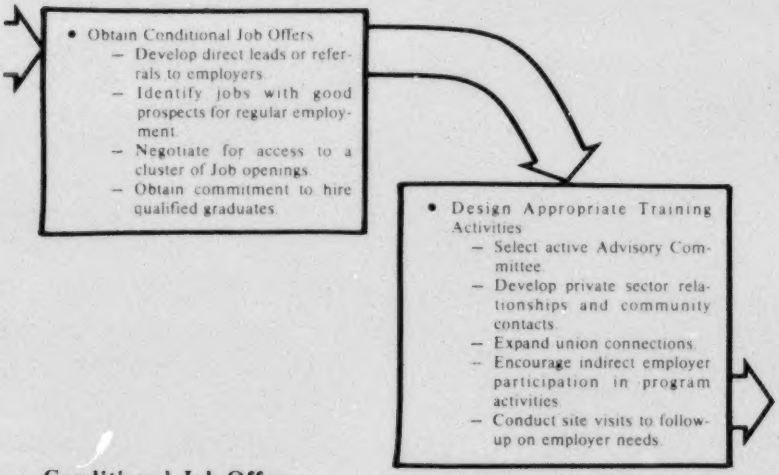
curriculum materials, training equipment and other non-instructional expenses;

- availability of clerical support and office services;
- planning time sufficient to identify an advisory committee, make employer contacts, develop conditional job offers, develop training programs, and locate outside funding; and
- development of a close link between project staff and Office of Instruction during the planning process to develop appropriate teaching and learning procedures and help to implement eventual training activities.

Chapter Two

THE BUSINESS-EDUCATION-LABOR PARTNERSHIP

The initial steps in starting a training program involve working with private employers to identify 1) specific employer needs, 2) conditional job offers, 3) actual work skills and attitudes to be covered in training, and 4) employment procedures for graduates. A crucial ingredient in these preliminary planning discussions is the active, direct participation of representatives from labor, business, and education. Each member of this reciprocal partnership plays a key role in developing a training program. The following sections define a conditional job offer and describe how union officials, representatives from the business community, and college staff work together to start a training program.


• Obtain Conditional Job Offers
– Develop direct leads or referrals to employers.
– Identify jobs with good prospects for regular employment.
– Negotiate for access to a cluster of Job openings.
– Obtain commitment to hire qualified graduates.
• Design Appropriate Training Activities
– Select active Advisory Committee.
– Develop private sector relationships and community contacts.
– Expand union connections.
– Encourage indirect employer participation in program activities.
– Conduct site visits to follow-up on employer needs.

Conditional Job Offers

Being able to offer students the incentive of a real job after training is an essential part of our counseling approach. A conditional job offer implies that an employer will make a special effort to hire groups of graduates of one of our training programs as soon as openings are available. This is not a guarantee of employment; it is a

carefully negotiated agreement that an employer will augment or adapt formal hiring procedures that often eliminate disabled applicants who may have the required work skills but lack self-confidence and verbal skills. For example, employers may agree that disabled applicants can *demonstrate* their work skills and attitudes instead of or in addition to taking a written exam or passing a formal employment interview. The skill and attitude requirements for the job in question are not changed for disabled applicants; instead, one or two components of the hiring process are adapted so that qualified disabled applicants can compete more equitably with nondisabled applicants.

Another important dimension of the conditional job offer concept is that we negotiate for access to a *cluster of openings* — at least 10 — in a specific occupational area. This group placement focus saves time and is congruent with our counseling philosophy. For example, we're very reluctant to spend much time developing job offers for one or two check processors. On the other hand, we are willing to invest from six to 12 months of research and discussion to produce conditional job offers and a training program that will eventually place 30 or 40 check processors. Philosophically, we're not interested in the placement of one or two token disabled workers; we are interested in the continual, long-term placement of large numbers of qualified people. In some instances, employers will agree to hire a certain number of disabled applicants who qualify for a given job; in other cases, the assurance of adapted hiring procedures, combined with a high number of annual openings in a certain job category, provide the incentive for us to invest the necessary developmental efforts.

We search for unskilled and semi-skilled jobs that have excellent prospects for regular employment over a long period of time. Many job categories that fit this criterion exist in medium-to large-sized industries and organizations, since large, complex organizations provide many opportunities for horizontal and vertical job mobility. Consequently, we try to identify likely entry-level job categories in trade occupations; in industries such as health care, transportation, manufacturing, and finance; and in large organizations such as banks, hospitals, and trade unions.

Identifying job categories that fit our criteria and then developing conditional job offers is a slow and frustrating task. Calling on employers without a referral or a direct lead is not very productive, even when we've researched local employment patterns and know

that a consistently high number of annual openings exist in a certain job category. If employers are not aware of our counseling philosophy and approach, they're not inclined to discuss the adaptation of hiring procedures or the development of a special training program. Without any advance contacts in an organization, we are rarely able to talk to the people who make hiring decisions. We may obtain the promise of one or two jobs for disabled workers, because most employers support the idea of giving disabled applicants an even chance. But these promised jobs rarely materialize, since they often represent a token philosophical agreement from employers who have typical misconceptions about hiring the disabled.

On the other hand, we find likely job categories and receptive employers through a strong, broad network of contacts in local businesses and unions. We have been able to make use of existing college relationships with the local business community but we have also developed new contacts with employers and union officials. We've concluded that the effective operation of a training and placement program for disabled adults requires the collaboration of several agencies and organizations in an active partnership. The partners in this enterprise — education, labor, and business — each have individual and mutually beneficial roles, and the resulting inter-organizational connections lead to the development of conditional job offers and flexible hiring procedures for disabled applicants. The following sections describe the roles that college staff, business representatives, and union officials play in our vocational counseling partnership.

The College

Vista is one of five public colleges operated by the Peralta Community College District, serving the residents of Albany, Alameda, Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland, and Piedmont in the San Francisco Bay Area, and the residents of Plumas County in Northern California. As one of seven noncampus colleges in the United States, Vista enrolls over 14,000 students in approximately 400 classes each semester offered in more than 300 locations scattered throughout the six cities served by the district: in senior citizen centers, corporate lunchrooms and boardrooms, public libraries, banks, churches, convalescent hospitals, post offices, and on the University of California, Berkeley campus. Classes are often offered in partnership with the agency or organization that supplies the college with rent-free

classroom space. Centralized personnel, registration, counseling, duplication, and other administrative services are provided by a small full-time staff housed in a Berkeley office building. Students generally are able to attend classes near their homes or places of employment.

The adults who enroll in Vista classes are not conventional college students. Vista students — average age 41 — are older, skill-oriented, discriminating educational consumers who combine their educational activities with the demands and responsibilities of working and raising families. Vista students do not form a homogeneous group. They possess diverse and sometimes unclear educational goals; their educational backgrounds range from high school to advanced degrees; their incomes cluster at middle to lower economic levels; their communication skills vary greatly; and many are in the midst of personal and/or occupational transitions. About 700 disabled students (half the total number of disabled students enrolled in all five Peralta colleges) enroll each semester in Vista's personal enrichment, pre-vocational, and vocational classes. A typical Vista student enrolls in only one or two classes each semester, and many students are interested in learning options such as experiential activities, independent study, and credit for prior learning. About half of these students are newcomers to postsecondary education, and Vista appeals to them because its instructional programs are convenient, practical, stimulating, and flexible.

Students can choose credit and non-credit classes that begin at various times during the semester. Classes meet on a leisurely weekly basis or an intensive weekend or daily schedule. The college is committed to using new instructional approaches, and students can presently choose from an instructional menu that includes formal lecture/discussion courses, computer-assisted classes, newspaper and television courses, field trips, independent study, and self-paced learning activities. These classes are developed and offered, usually in response to specific community requests, by Vista full-time staff and part-time faculty.

The college's role in our vocational counseling partnership is to provide flexible, high-quality instruction, access to a broad spectrum of supportive services, and linkages with local business and social service organizations. Vista is ideally suited to this role because of the college's operating philosophy and noncampus status. College staff are accustomed to responding quickly to requests for educa-

tional services from all segments of the East Bay community. Many new classes, particularly in business-related curriculum areas, are offered each semester in a variety of instructional formats, and are taught by professionals who work in local businesses and agencies.

The college's reliance on community organizations for classroom space has resulted in very strong college-community relationships. College staff also serve as educational brokers by referring students and community organizations to other colleges in the district or to other service groups when the college is not able to provide a particular service. the advantage in operating such a flexible, community-based learning institution is that the college is able to serve as a point of entry for many people who would not ordinarily be involved in postsecondary education. For example, many of the college's disabled students use Vista classes as readiness experiences before enrollment in pre-employment or training programs offered by Vista and other colleges in the district.

Private Sector Relationships

Strong connections with different segments of the private sector are crucial to our vocational counseling approach, since we depend on private employers to help develop our training activities and then hire our graduates. We use Vista's network of contacts in local business and industry in our search for receptive employers and conditional job offers, but we also have developed ways of establishing and reinforcing our own connections with private sector organizations. One way of developing positive relationships with private employers is to get them indirectly involved in our program — *before* we ever mention jobs for the disabled. We often intitiate this kind of indirect participation and support by talking individually with employers who have been referred to us or by inviting certain employers to be members of our project's special advisory committee.

The Advisory Committee on Vocational Programs for the Disabled, which is composed of 10 to 12 representatives of major private employers and social service agencies in the East Bay area, meets about three times each semester at the college or at a member's office. Committee members are asked to participate because they have influence on personnel procedures in their organizations, and because they seem to be creative, flexible people who are willing to contribute ideas and real work-world experiences to our project. The membership of the committee is fluid; some members have been

active participants for several years, but others leave and are replaced.

A major focus of advisory committee meetings and projects is the sensitization of all members to the abilities, skills, and special needs of disabled workers. For example, we frequently discuss topics such as the four major types of disabilities, the worksite implications of different physical and mental limitations, misconceptions about the problems associated with hiring disabled workers, and ways to comply with Sections 503 and 504 of the 1973 Federal Rehabilitation Act. Many such issues surfaced during a general project of the advisory committee: the formation of the City of Oakland Mayor's Commission on the Disabled. By helping to define the role and composition of this new city-wide commission, our advisory committee members learned so much about disabled people that they became advocates themselves. Their advocacy attitudes broadened their ideas of appropriate jobs for the disabled, which led in turn to thoughtful discussions of jobs in their organizations, the specific skills required, and the manner in which standard personnel procedures often work to the disadvantage of certain disabled applicants.

Sensitization and indirect participation are also the objectives of our individual talks with employers who are not part of our advisory committee. In trying to establish additional relationships with private sector organizations, we first identify medium to large-sized firms in the area — since we assume that larger organizations will have frequent openings in several job categories. Then we locate a contact person in each target organization through recommendations from Vista staff or our advisory committee. Ideally, we obtain an introduction to an individual who is directly involved in personnel decisions, but we'll talk with any receptive staff member (e.g., vice presidents, office managers, training officers, or recruiters).

When we find an employer representative who will talk with us, which usually requires persistence, we ask what their employment needs are and how we can help. Jobs for disabled workers are rarely mentioned specifically in initial talks with employers. At this preliminary stage, we are more interested in getting employers indirectly involved in our program. For example, we may ask an office manager or training officer to talk with students in one of our training classes about interview procedures or the characteristics of a certain job.

This indirect approach demands patience and time, but it often

results in an effective college-employer relationship that may eventually lead to conditional job offers and employer assistance in developing our training programs. As members of our advisory group become more aware of the employment potential of disabled workers, they also become more alert to the possibility of recruiting the disabled for present and future openings in their organizations. As employers observe our training activities, they understand that we are interested in the long-term employment of disabled adults who have good work skills and attitudes. Understanding turns to advocacy, and these employers are often willing to adapt hiring procedures so that qualified disabled applicants can compete fairly for jobs without any compromise of existing employment standards.

The benefits of developing these private sector relationships are by no means one-sided. We learn more about the private sector's employment needs, which makes it easier for our graduates to find and keep good jobs. Advantages to employers include clarification of their rights and responsibilities relative to federal regulations; the chance to help train a group of reliable, competent workers; and access to special services the college can provide for all their employees (e.g., management training seminars, disability awareness classes, and alcohol management workshops as described in Chapter 8).

The Union Connection

Since union jobs are usually well-paying and secure, and since many of the blue-collar and white-collar jobs in the private sector organizations that interested us were unionized, we decided very early that we needed to develop a strong relationship with local unions. Historically, community college personnel and union officials have had differences of opinion on the value of certain curriculum materials and teaching strategies, and initially we were unsure of the quickest and most effective method of involving union officials in our project. Fortunately, we soon discovered a national project in Oakland that seemed especially designed to assist us. Oakland is one of nine metropolitan areas across the country selected to pilot-test the Handicapped Placement Program, an innovative project sponsored by the Human Resources Development Institute (HRDI) of the AFL-CIO.

The HRDI is the training and employment arm of the AFL-CIO. It is a consortium of labor, government, industry, and educational

institutions that was established in 1968 at the request of President Johnson. The principle responsibility of the HRDI is to promote training and employment opportunities for the disadvantaged, underemployed, and unemployed. The institute supports programs that overcome problems and barriers that keep adult workers from realizing their employment potential. HRDI staff provide technical assistance to both unions and employers, and operate special employment and training programs for women, minorities, veterans, and other special clientele groups.

The Handicapped Placement Program, an HRDI project initiated in 1976, embodies the AFL-CIO philosophy that all qualified mentally and physically handicapped workers should have equal opportunities for employment. The objectives of this special program are: to place qualified handicapped workers into union jobs; to help injured workers reenter the work force; and to provide technical assistance to unions and employers who are not in compliance with federal affirmative action guidelines.

At each of the nine nationwide pilot sites of this special program, a placement specialist connects people and organizations (e.g., local community colleges, adult education schools, Central Labor Councils, and local private employers) that can help disabled workers get unionized jobs. The goal of each placement specialist is to place 75 disabled workers per year in private-sector, unsubsidized jobs.

Oakland's placement specialist, who is a long-time union worker and organizer, supported our counseling and placement approach. We decided to collaborate closely, since our joint efforts would be more productive than working separately. We focused initially on developing the contacts, connections, and agreements that would lead to long-range, continual placement of large numbers of disabled workers. A great deal of time and energy has been invested in persuading local private-sector employers and corresponding unions to hire more disabled workers. Actually, we want more than philosophical agreement from unions and employers: we want them to agree to assist in the placement of specific numbers of qualified, disabled graduates of our training programs.

Because of our HRDI placement specialist's strong union background, we have gained the support of the Central Labor Council of Alameda County and of many local unions. Together, we work hard to convince union officials that we're not asking for favors, that we don't want employment standards to be compromised for one or two

token disabled workers, and that we do want them to help develop a training program and then dispatch or accept qualified disabled graduates of the program.

Union officials, once they understand our program objectives, often help us approach local organizations that employ their members. Many of our training and placement efforts in the private sector

Shown above from left to right are: (seated) Ken Croswell, International Representative, Communication Workers of America and R.L. Nelson, Employment Manager Recruiting, Pacific Telephone. (standing) Owen Marron, Handicapped Placement Specialist, Human Resources Development Institute, AFL-CIO, Theda McNeil, Coordination Specialist, Employment Development Department, Joan Leon, Assistant Director, California Department of Rehabilitation and David Hans, Project Director, Vista College

would be ineffective without the tacit approval of the unions concerned; our reliance on union officials as active partners in the planning process results in explicit union approval and support before a training program is initiated, and our eventual graduates have a much better chance of being hired. Descriptions of training activities in the next chapter demonstrate the active role that union officials — of the Roofers Union, Communication Workers of America, and the Service Employees International Union — have played in identifying work skills and attitudes and in planning training activities.

Summary

Working directly with private employers and union officials to obtain conditional job offers, to plan hiring procedures that do not dis-

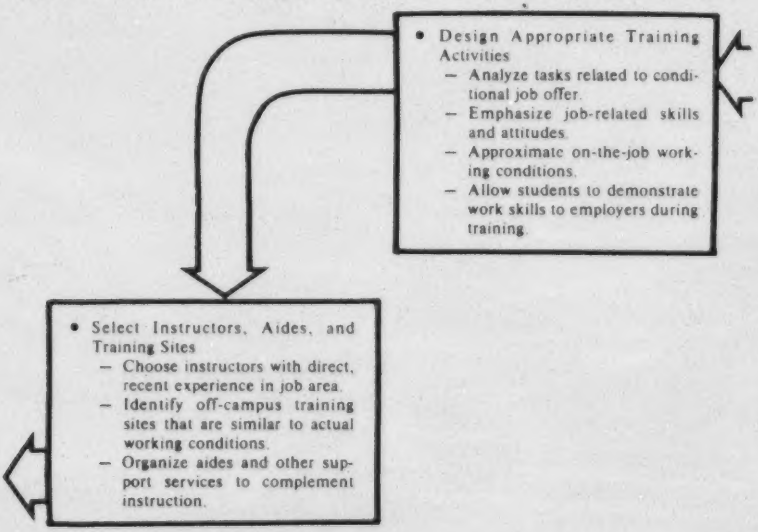
criminate against disabled applicants, and to identify skills and attitudes that should be covered in training is not a quick, easy process. This preliminary planning procedure, which occurs before students are recruited for training, demands the active collaboration of college staff, private employers, and union officials. Uneasiness about compromising work standards, anxieties about compliance with federal regulations, assumptions about worksite accommodations, and the lack of information on all sides about disabilities can be overcome only by the consistent, open sharing of information and airing of concerns. This cooperative process of discussion, analysis, and negotiation eventually results in employer-union-college agreements to hire disabled graduates of cooperatively planned training programs. The planning process may take from six months to a year, but it is time well spent when the outcomes are a high-quality training program, a high placement and job retention rate, and positive long-term relationships with unions and private sector organizations.

We had a head start in establishing good relationships with unions and private employers because of Vista's strong community connections and Oakland's special HRDI project. A broad network of existing contacts was helpful but not essential to the development of our programs. If contacts don't exist, they can be developed slowly with the same indirect process that we used, by building on one or two credible associations with local employers and union officials. If the initial emphasis is on open discussions and thoughtful planning instead of requests for jobs, then all participants have a chance to examine questions, assumptions, and concerns before making commitments for training or placement activities. Every college has made some good community connections; using our counseling approach requires the recruitment of one or two employer or union representatives who are willing to help plan a training program for disabled students. Additional contacts are easier once one strong training program has been planned and has produced competent graduates.

Chapter Three

TRAINING AND PLACEMENT STRATEGIES

The positive relationships formed with union officials and private employers in the search for conditional job offers lead smoothly to employer and union participation in constructing the appropriate training and placement activities for a particular job. We try to develop strong, long-term partnerships between union personnel, employers, and college staff. Unions and employers want to hire competent, productive workers; college staff want to provide consistent high-quality skill training that will produce qualified workers. Consequently, it makes good sense for college staff and employers to work together to plan training activities that focus on the specific skills and attitudes necessary for successful job performance. Because private sector representatives have been so directly and intimately involved in planning, operating, and observing our training activities, they know that students who have successfully completed one of our training programs will be good employment risks.


• Design Appropriate Training Activities
– Analyze tasks related to conditional job offer.
– Emphasize job-related skills and attitudes.
– Approximate on-the-job working conditions.
– Allow students to demonstrate work skills to employers during training.
• Select Instructors, Aides, and Training Sites
– Choose instructors with direct, recent experience in job area.
– Identify off-campus training sites that are similar to actual working conditions.
– Organize aides and other support services to complement instruction.

Before we describe our training and placement strategies, we should note that our definition of a training program is *a series of short-term activities that lead to successful job placement.* None of our programs last longer than a semester, in contrast with traditional vocational training programs that may require one or two years of full-time study. We emphasize brief, intensive programs — from 36 to 108 hours in length — that combine orientation, training, and pre-employment objectives. A program may consist of only one 108-hour training class or of one 36-hour orientation class. Some classes begin and end at specific times; others are open for enrollment at any time during the semester.

The complexity of the job requirements and the objective of the class — orientation, pre-employment, and/or training — determine the nature and intensity of the learning experience. We focus on the critical job skills and attitudes, and we encourage students to learn and demonstrate these skills as quickly as possible. A successful placement generally occurs immediately after a student demonstrates the appropriate skills and attitudes. The immediacy of the job possibility, combined with the short, intensive nature of the classes, certainly contributes to the high motivation and low attrition rates of students.

Once we've obtained conditional employment offers in a specific job category, we work with employers and union officials to plan a training program that:

1. emphasizes specific skills and attitudes that employers have linked with successful job placement and performance;
2. includes activities that approximate the actual on-the-job working conditions and gauge the motivation of students;
3. is taught by a fair and demanding instructor, preferably someone who works (or has worked) in the company or union that will place our graduates; and
4. gives students the opportunity to demonstrate their work skills and attitudes to potential employers.

Most of these training strategies are common-sense ideas that are usually incorporated into conventional training programs. The unique aspect of our approach is the *employer's or union's direct, frequent participation.* When planning the topics a certain program should cover, we ask employers exactly what they expect an employee to know and be able to do for the particular job role. Outlines from similar training courses offered at other colleges can be

helpful, but we depend more on the training recommendations of local employers and union personnel. Together, we carefully analyze the job tasks to discover the required skills and attitudes, how they can be taught, and how they can be demonstrated. Whenever possible, we hire instructors or special consultants for the training class who have had years of work experience in the company or union that has made the conditional job offer to our graduates. Often we help these experienced practitioners to get a college teaching certificate; occasionally we team them with experienced college teachers. Our intent is to train students thoroughly in essential job skills and the tricks of the trade as well.

Another key aspect of our training approach is the *use of employer observations or other work performance assessment methods as substitutes for the conventional job interview.* Employers and union officials are encouraged to observe and talk with our students during training class sessions. Employers visit classes frequently and occasionally hire students immediately. We encourage work performance adaptations of formal hiring procedures primarily because the traditional employment interview process is designed to screen out people who do not look or act "normal." Our students, due to mental and physical disabilities that are combined with a lack of confidence, usually ring alarm bells in the minds of personnel interviewers. As mentioned previously, our students are more inexperienced, more anxious, and less articulate than the general disabled population. Therefore, we have structured each of our training classes to function as a learning experience *and* as an avenue for students to demonstrate their work skills to prospective employers.

Perhaps the best way to explain our training and placement approach is to trace the development of several of our programs. The following sections describe our roofer's pre-apprenticeship, custodian, postal service clerk, and intercept operator programs, with examples of the mistakes we've made and the successes our graduates have experienced as a result of each program.

Roofer's Pre-Apprenticeship Program

Our roofer's pre-apprenticeship program was designed to orient and screen entry-level applicants for the roofing industry. This vocational area was chosen because it offers the incentives of high employment potential and high wages. Roofers' apprentices, if they can manage the physically demanding work duties, start at about $7 an hour and can earn over $25,000 a year at the completion of the

four-year apprenticeship program. College staff, Department of Rehabilitation representatives, the HRDI placement specialist, and personnel from the Roofer's Union (Local 81) planned our apprenticeship screening activities, and union officials agreed to dispatch those students who completed the program.

In preliminary planning discussions, union officials reported that getting new apprentices to show up at job sites consistently at the crack of dawn was a major problem. Roofers usually start work at first light to avoid the heat of mid-day, when roof temperatures often are 20 degrees higher than ground temperatures. In addition, when an apprentice is late, a journeyman roofer who is being paid a very high salary is forced to stand around and wait. Union officials also said they were looking for careful people who could safely handle the physically demanding work. Therefore, we designed a 33-hour screening program that stressed a) prompt, regular attendance at 6 a.m. class sessions, b) the physical demands of the work, and c) the safety aspects of roofing. The class was taught by the local union's apprenticeship coordinator, who has been in the trade for 20 years.

The program was publicized through the college's general information network and through meetings with Department of Rehabilitation counselors who might refer applicants. We carefully structured the program's orientation and subsequent meetings to gauge the motivation of prospective students. For example, orientation to the program's goals and activities was held on a Saturday morning at Oakland's Labor Temple; and the five class sessions started at 6 a.m. each day of the following week, either in a classroom at the Labor Temple or at a job site. Students who arrived late were turned away and advised to explore other job areas where early morning punctuality was not crucial.

Students with different kinds of disabilities enrolled in this program. Most had learning disabilities or were marginally mentally retarded. One Vietnam era veteran was physically capable but had a gunshot wound in his jaw that affected his speech. With the exception of two nondisabled men who responded to the college's general publicity, the students were all disabled in ways that didn't interfere with their physical capabilities but did impair their ability to succeed in formal job interview situations. All had a history of intermittent employment or unemployment.

The attrition rate was high in the first three days of the class. Of the 28 students who enrolled in the program during the Saturday orien-

tation, only 22 showed up at 6 a.m. on Monday. Four more students had dropped out by Wednesday. We were not distressed when students decided not to complete the program. Their attendance, however brief, exposed them to the real work tasks of the roofing trade. If students opted to drop out because they discovered that they didn't want to be roofers, then our program had served a perfectly legitimate career exploration function. All of the 18 students who completed the five-day sequence of classes have now been dispatched as apprentice roofers on union jobs.

This program was very successful in terms of the long-range partnership that developed between the college and the roofer's union, and in terms of the successful placement of graduates as well. However, we made one major mistake in planning the class activities. The apprenticeship coordinator talked with students about the work duties and safety requirements, and all students visited several job sites to observe working conditions and talk to apprentices. But we did not take each student up on a roof during the classes. One graduate of the program, a woman with dyslexia, was dispatched to a union job on a huge, flat roof of a three-story building. All morning she worked well in the middle part of the flat roof. At lunch she wouldn't look over the edge. At quitting time she wouldn't and couldn't come down. Needless to say, every student in our screening process now goes up on a roof, buckles on a safety harness, and looks over the edge. Acrophobics do not belong in the roofing trade. We were remiss in not making the class activities more closely approximate the working conditions.

Custodial Services Program

Almost every special employment program for the disabled in California and across the nation has a custodial program, primarily because this is a stereotypical job for the mentally retarded. Even so, we decided to develop our program because trained, experienced custodians are in continual demand by public and private sector employers. The major difference between our program and most existing custodial training programs is that we place students in unionized private sector jobs. The salary, benefits, and security differences between union and non-union custodial work are significant.

In planning the learning activities for this program, we worked closely with local employers, members of the local Service

Employees Union, and the HRDI placement specialist. Union officials and employers both said "we need reliable people." They wanted to hire custodians who would show up on time on a regular basis and could perform specific custodial tasks. Personal reliability was rated as highly as work skills in getting and keeping custodial jobs. Therefore, our training class emphasizes regular, prompt attendance, as well as the basic and special procedures of the custodial trade.

The custodial training class, which runs for 108 hours over 18 weeks, is team-taught by a community college instructor with social services experience and an instructional assistant who has been a practicing custodian for 30 years. This teacher-practitioner team combination has been very effective. As part of the class's regular activities, students maintain Oakland's Labor Temple. Student attendance and work records are open to employers with the students' consent, and prospective employers are encouraged to observe the students as they perform custodial activities in the Labor Temple.

Most of the students who have completed this class have been employed in private industry. Some were hired after an employer observed them working in the class. Others were hired on the recommendation of the class instructors, who are careful to endorse only those students who meet the firm reliability and skill standards set for the class.

Student acquires first-hand experience in our custodial training program, sponsored jointly by Vista College and the Service Employees International Union, Local 81.

Employer observations and instructor recommendations are methods of substituting work performance for a formal interview in the employment process, and the value of this strategy is demonstrated again and again. For example, a visiting employer asked one of our custodial students how he would clean a certain type of surface. This student had become an excellent custodian. He knew when and how to use dozens of different cleaning compounds; he could load a truck with all the necessary equipment (which he also knew how to use) for two or three different custodial jobs. When faced with a direct question from a man who might hire him, however, this student froze. He mumbled that he didn't know and then also denied knowing how to use a particular piece of equipment. The class instructor intervened and asked the student to *show* the employer how he would clean a similar kind of surface and how different equipment was used. The student came to life and confidently demonstrated his skills. He felt much more comfortable and competent in showing what he could do rather than talking about it. The employer hired him. That student and many others like him — competent but nervous and inarticulate — would have been quickly eliminated in any formal job interview.

Postal Service Mail Handler and Clerk Program

In addition to formal interviews, the traditional employment process contains another procedure that is often an obstacle for disabled job seekers: written employment tests. Written tests can be economical and efficient screening devices if they measure language or computational skills that are necessary for successful job performance. In many cases, however, written tests are not good predictors of eventual job performance. Many candid employers agree but also say they cannot afford the personnel and time necessary to develop and implement individualized, performance-based assessment strategies. Written tests, whether or not they are used most effectively, continue to function as screening devices that eliminate many job seekers who may actually possess the necessary job skills and attitudes. Anxiety, lack of confidence, and unsophisticated test-taking skills are factors that lead to failure in written tests; disabled job seekers are often able to do the work involved but cannot pass written tests.

The postal service mailhandler and clerk program was developed as a way for qualified disabled job seekers to avoid taking the Civil Service exam, which is notorious for its length, complexity, and dubious rela-

tionship to job performance. No specific training occurs in our program. Instead, we recruit and screen applicants, and refer them to the Post Office if we think that they can do the work required of mail handlers. Our screening process includes a variety of formal and informal assessment strategies (see Chapter Five for details) that accurately measure the appropriate language, computational, and problem-solving skills in a non-threatening manner. These assessment strategies enable us to refer capable applicants who know what the job will entail and who are certain that they're interested in a mail handler position — people who would be good employment risks for the Post Office.

We developed this referral and assignment arrangement after numerous discussions with the Handicap Program Coordinator of the Oakland Main Post Office, which is the central mail handling facility for the entire East Bay region. Owing to the size of this facility and the high turnover rate in entry-level positions, mail handlers and other beginning clerks are continually needed. The Handicap Program Coordinator, who functions as liaison with the disabled community, coordinates special admittance employment programs. After we explained that we would conduct all the testing and screening, he agreed that the Post Office personnel department would "try out" at least 10 of our students each year. Officials of the local of the Mail Handlers Union, which represents postal employees, also agreed to our special temporary placement program.

Once referred, our students are usually hired for a maximum of six months of temporary work. The "temporary" designation of this arrangement means that the Post Office is not obligated to hire our referrals permanently; but this placement strategy enables disabled applicants to learn and demonstrate their skills while on the job, instead of on a written test. We encourage postal supervisors to communicate clearly with our students and to demand that they perform as well as other employees. Some on-the-job training occurs with our students, as it does with all new postal employees, but our students receive no special considerations. If they do not demonstrate good work habits and skills during their temporary tenure, they are terminated.

This program has been an unqualified success. In the last three years, 30 mentally retarded or developmentally disabled students have been referred to the Oakland Main Post Office for mail handler positions; 27 have moved from temporary to permanent employment with the Post Office. In three years, only three employees hired under this special placement arrangement have been fired. Vista Col-

lege staff now provide all of the assessment, referral, and follow-up services for this program. College counselors, rehabilitation counselors, and sheltered workshop staff refer capable, motivated applicants to us, and we then test and refer qualified people to Post Office personnel. We also check on placements and advise Post Office supervisors about other matters concerning the disabled. We consider this program a success because of the high ratio of long-term placements and because of the positive, broad relationship that has evolved with Post Office personnel. Vista will soon provide a special training seminar on affirmative action and EEO procedures for the disabled to 250 Post Office supervisors and managers.

Intercept Operator

This program illustrates several of our crucial training and placement strategies; it is particularly exciting because it establishes the precedent for conducting a special training and placement program with a major private sector employer. A member of our advisory committee who is a recruiter for Pacific Telephone learned that a new division was being established in San Francisco that would be staffed by 95 intercept operators. He alerted us to the possibility of training blind students and other disabled persons for this new division. Vista staff, the HRDI placement specialist, and the Pacific Telephone recruiter initiated a series of meetings with Pacific Telephone administrators and officials from the Communications Workers of America, the union that represents telephone company employees.

After almost a year of discussions, Pacific Telephone has extended 20 conditional job offers to graduates of our intercept operator training program. We have agreed to recruit, screen, train, and refer qualified intercept operator applicants to Pacific Telephone. If our students do well in an interview, they will earn one of the 20 conditional job offers. Once hired, they are eligible for normal promotion and transfer opportunities within the telephone company. This career advancement potential is especially important to many of our students who are not interested in or not able to pursue advanced college degrees.

A Pacific Telephone consultant helped design our training class to insure that all activities accurately reflect the required job skills and attitudes. Intercept operators must be able to quickly enter seven- and ten-digit numbers that they hear from the customer into a push button console. In the training class, students learn how to use a 10-key adding machine (adapted to replicate the ONI operator console

key configuration) and then practice recording seven- and ten-digit numbers from an audiotape. Practice drills emphasize speed and accuracy so that students will learn to record up to 200 calls an hour. Punctuality and reliability are two other essential job requirements; so student attendance records are carefully monitored. Originally,

Al Bodero, Pacific Telephone's Manager of the ONI section in San Francisco, works with James Watts, a new Pacific Telephone employee and a graduate of Vista's Intercept Operator training program.

the class met for three hours twice a week, and students could enroll at any time during the semester. The class is now offered through funding from the California Worksite Education and Training Act (CWETA) for 30 hours per week for six weeks.

The various components of this training class increase the chances that students will successfully negotiate the eventual job interview. The students who are referred to Pacific Telephone will be confident that they can perform the job; their attendance and punctuality records in our class will demonstrate important work habits; and they will have practiced good interviewing skills several times in the training class. We anticipate that most of the students we refer will be hired by Pacific Telephone; eight referrals have been hired so far and several more are on an employment waiting list.

Plans for the Future

All of the programs described here will continue as long as the conditional job offers exist in each employment area and as long as the programs produce qualified, competent graduates. These initial programs have given our counseling approach a good "track

record." Because we've invested so much time and thought into developing a philosophical and practical partnership with union officials and employers, they are very supportive when we suggest new programs or variations of existing ones. Our present contacts in unions and private sector organizations now recommend our programs and students to their colleagues and friends in different unions and organizations, and these recommendations often develop into new training programs. We have defined a way of working together that lets all members of the partnership — the college, the union, the employer — satisfy individual objectives and needs.

A good example of the "trading" that occurs in this type of relationship is our recent discussions with officials from the Hospital and Institutional Workers Union (Local 250 of the SEIU). Staff from this local union contacted us to ask whether we could give their supervisors and shop stewards a brief workshop in assisting alcoholic employees. We immediately agreed to provide such educational support; activities that address disabilities like alcohol abuse are also one of our priorities. In return for offering nine hours of training for about 200 supervisors and stewards, the union is considering recommending nearly 100 placements for disabled workers in hospital jobs (e.g., laundry, custodial, and food services). The appropriate training programs for these positions will be developed as soon as we have strong conditional job offers from the union and the hospitals involved.

Training and technical assistance also play a part in preliminary discussions we're now having with administrative personnel in the private security and public transit industries. We've asked these administrators what the college can do for them; we have not yet talked about jobs for the disabled. If the college is able to satisfy some of the training needs of these administrators, they will be more cooperative when we bring up the issue of jobs for qualified, competent workers.

College Administrative Support

Training and placement programs such as those described here cannot operate successfully without two kinds of administrative support from the college: a) procedures that allow the development of a class or series of classes very rapidly, and b) the capability of offering classes in a variety of instructional formats. Most colleges have lengthy, formal curriculum development procedures. Classes usually begin and end at a certain time each semester or quarter, and it often takes a full academic year to get approval for a new class. Fortunately, Vista staff are accustomed to responding quickly and flexi-

bly to community requests for educational services. It takes about two months to get approval for a new class, and the majority of the 300-400 classes offered by the college each semester are short-term, intensive courses that begin at various times during the semester, and are taught by hourly, part-time instructors.

It is quite possible to cut down on curriculum development turnaround time and develop flexible kinds of learning experiences within the structure of larger, more formal institutions; however, the active cooperation of a key instructional administrator is essential. Accelerated curriculum development procedures must be adopted; record-keeping procedures such as daily attendance must be systematized; and faculty may have to adapt their teaching styles.

Summary

All program planning occurs before students are recruited. Training activities focus on orientation, pre-employment, or specific work skills, and a training program is usually a semester-long series of brief, intensive activities. After obtaining conditional job offers in a specific occupational area, we work with private employers and union officials to plan training programs that:

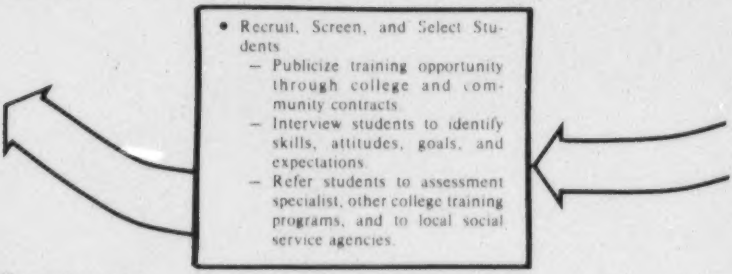
1. emphasize employer-identified work skills and attitudes,
2. approximate on-the-job working conditions,
3. gauge the motivation of students,
4. are taught by fair but demanding instructors, and
5. enable students to demonstrate their work skills and attitudes to potential employers.

The unique aspects of this training approach are the direct, ongoing participation of private sector representatives and the use of work performance assessment to augment or replace portions of the formal hiring process. Examples of performance assessment techniques are employer observations of training classes and special temporary placements of graduates in potentially permanent positions. Each successful planning and training process adds to the strength and credibility of the college-union-employer partnership, and the college often offers special seminars or workshops for private sector employees as its part of the bargain. College administrative support is necessary to accelerate curriculum development procedures, systematize record-keeping procedures, and help faculty adapt their teaching styles.

Chapter Four

INITIAL STUDENT CONTACTS

Student recruitment occurs after we have obtained conditional job offers and planned special placement procedures and appropriate training activities. At this stage we are ready to publicize the training opportunity, interview interested students, and then refer them to the project's assessment specialist, to local social service agencies, or to occupational programs offered by other colleges in our district.


• Recruit, Screen, and Select Students
– Publicize training opportunity through college and community contracts
– Interview students to identify skills, attitudes, goals, and expectations
– Refer students to assessment specialist, other college training programs, and to local social service agencies.

Recruitment

Conditional employment offers create definite training incentives. Recruitment simply becomes a matter of advertising the conditional job offer and publicizing the training standards, which differ slightly with each particular program. Successful recruitment strategies include: calling Vista students who might be interested, distributing descriptive flyers to the community network of special interest agencies, and making presentations to groups of Rehabilitation Department counselors and high school counselors. We try to reach all segments of the disabled community with complete and accurate information about training opportunities and entry requirements in the month before a specific program is scheduled to begin.

We require that all interested students initiate contact with college staff, arrange for an initial interview, and transport themselves to the college for the interview. We will not register a student in a training program solely on the recommendation of another counselor; nor will we immediately register applicants with whom we talk during agency presentations. By requiring all applicants to arrange an interview and then appear on their own at the college, we get a rough

measure of their motivation, and we are able to screen out students who want to enroll simply to appease their counselors or friends. We want applicants who are genuinely interested in working, and our initial inteviews give both them and us additional information about whether they would be interested in and qualified for one of our training programs.

Intake Interviews

In the initial interview with a student, we try to accomplish four objectives:

a. obtain background information concerning personal and work history,

b. develop a sense of rapport,

c. establish a mutual goal that the student can and wants to accomplish, and

d. clarify expectations about our training programs.

Of these four tasks, developing a personal connection with each potential applicant is the most important, since our target population consists of disabled individuals who generally lack self-confidence and need extra encouragement to clarify and and then pursue their employment goals.

We first try to learn about their previous educational, work, and training experiences, as well as their short- and long-term employment goals. In most cases, our students haven't had much work experience. They're uncertain of what they can or want to do, and often they are uncomfortably inarticulate in interview situations. So we question, listen, and probe very carefully to help them describe their interests, skills, and abilities.

Whenever possible, the outcome of this intake interview is the establishment with each student of a mutual goal — *an agreement as to the next small or large step that person will accomplish.* In many cases, this goal is enrollment in one of our training programs, if it fits their interests and if they meet our training requirements. In other cases, the mutual goal might be to talk with our assessment counselor about enrolling in a career planning class or completing some assessment exercises. Whatever the goal, it must be a positive next step that is accomplishable.

We have discovered that students come in with widely varying expectations of what our training programs will accomplish. Another function of the intake interview is to *clarify student expectations*

about training activities and outcomes, and to clarify our expectations about student performance. Our applicants often aren't very knowledgeable about what the job involved really entails. Therefore, a reasonable goal might be for a student to attend the first session of a training class or go on a field trip to see whether the job really is interesting and appropriate. Occasionally, students are not interested in a training program after they've visited a job site and observed the work tasks first-hand. We don't penalize students for this kind of decision. The training class has served as a useful form of career exploration, and we all have more information that will make future career decisions and goals more realistic.

Individual interviews are time consuming, even if they're done by trained paraprofessionals, but we dislike giving up the chance for a face-to-face meeting with each student. We always personally interview applicants for a new training program, so we can be reasonably sure that candidates will be able to complete the program and be successfully placed. Telephone interviews are conducted only if a program has been offered several times or if we're overwhelmed with applicants. If telephone applicants seem to be interested and qualified, we tell them to attend the first training class. At that class meeting, we make a special effort to talk individually with everyone, and the activities and outcomes of the program are thoroughly discussed. The employer who made the conditional job offer talks about employer expectations, and the instructor of the class talks about student performance requirements.

Referral

The options after an intake interview with a student include referral to: one of our training programs, a regular training program at another college, our assessment counselor, or college-sponsored developmental and pre-employment classes. Referral decisions are based on a preliminary assessment of the student's skills, aptitudes, and training readiness.

Referral directly to training occurs when we feel that students have the necessary skills and aptitudes. This happens infrequently, since it assumes a high level of career awareness, solid work skills and aptitudes, and strong motivation. More often we discover in initial interviews that students are not sure what they want to do. They need to gather more information about themselves and the work world, or they need to strengthen their academic or work-related skills before they make a training decision.

Approximately 70 percent of the students who are interviewed are referred to our assessment counselor. In some cases, assessment of work-related or academic skills is required before entry into training programs; we also refer students to assessment if they're very unsure about career goals. If we do not have a training program that matches a student's interests and aptitudes, we refer that student to assessment and also to other Vista classes — so students can strengthen skills and learn more about themselves while they're waiting for an appropriate training program to be developed.

Summary

After conditional job offers, special placement procedures, and necessary training activities have been developed, students are recruited through a month-long publicity campaign directed at local social service agencies, high schools, and community groups. All interested students are required to initiate contact with college staff. In an intake interview, we determine whether the student's interests and skills fit the training program, and the student begins to clarify employment goals. The result of this intitial intervew is a mutually agreed-upon plan concerning enrollment in a training program, exploration of other work/training possibilities, or particpation in assessment exercises to further clarify employment objectives.

Chapter Five

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

Assessment is a controversial topic. Is there really one best method for deciding whether a person will or won't succeed in a certain job, class, or activity? Can affective characteristics such as motivation or judgment be measured accurately and reliably? When is it appropriate to use subjective rather than objective tests? Should the cognitive ability of an individual be compared to the cognitive ability of the general population, or to criteria established by the assessor? Can people learn enough about taking tests to significantly affect test scores? What kind of assessment activities are effective for screening, selection, and diagnosis?

Assessment specialists in the public and private sectors disagree, sometimes vehemently, about the most reliable, accurate methods of measuring individual skills, motivation, and experience. The tension that surrounds assessment — for the assessor and assessee — increases when the value attached to the assessment context is high (e.g. getting a job, promotion, or access to special services) *and* the individuals to be assessed possess special characteristics that differ from the general population (e.g., the disadvantaged, the disabled). Consequently, vocational assessment is often a high-stress activity for our disabled students.

We use assessment strategies intended to decrease anxiety and at the same time produce accurate, reliable data. The activities described in the following sections represent an eclectic, individualized assessment approach that demands a significant investment of time, persistence, and creativity; however, positive student outcomes have convinced us of the value of our assessment philosophy and activities.

Assessment Philosophy

Three principles have guided our choice and use of assessment activities:

1. *Assessment is a continuous process.* Student skills, interests, and motivation are measured at various stages of participation in all of our training programs.

2. *General standardized tests often do not accurately measure the abilities and potential of disabled people.* We prefer to use subjective and objective measures of specific job-related skills.
3. *Assessment is a diagnostic tool that includes rather than eliminates students from our programs.* We identify and then measure only the specific skills and attitudes necessary to succeed in our training programs.

This ongoing, eclectic, diagnostic approach to assessment grew out of our frustration with the one-shot, general, standardized assessment techniques that are often used with the disabled and disadvantaged. Many such adults have been eliminated from work and training programs on the basis of poor scores in general aptitude and intelligence tests. We believe that such data often are not good indicators of employment and training potential, and that many disabled and disadvantaged adults have been unfairly screened out of training programs.

Two case studies reinforce our reluctance to use general standardized tests as screening devices. On several occasions, we have used tests adapted for the disabled, but have concluded that even these test results do not always concur with our personal evaluation of the student's abilities and potential.

These illustrations are not meant to indict all standardized tests; however, we believe that other assessment techniques are more accurate, reliable measures of the abilities and potentials of disabled persons. Until standardized tests that have been normed on a disabled population are available, we will continue to use (and develop) a mixture of observational, experiential, and performance-based assessment strategies. When necessary, we use specific standardized skill tests, but only if the skills involved are job-related.

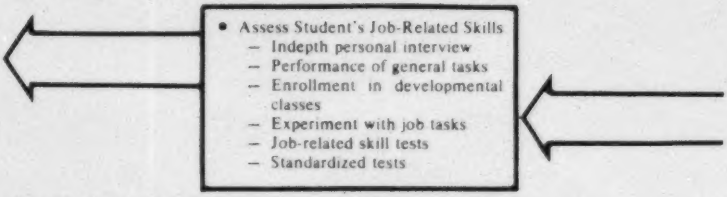
The following sections describe the major kinds of activities we use to produce information about student interests, abilities, and readiness to start training or working. Each activity gives a measure of intellectual, emotional, maturational, or social characteristics. Viewed as a sequence, these activities focus on readiness and ability factors that correlate highly with job success:

1. interviews,
2. general task performance,
3. participation in developmental classes,
4. vocational experimentation,
5. job-related skill tests, and
6. general and specific standardized tests.

CASE STUDIES

- Deborah, who has been blind since birth, also has a mild case of cerebral palsy. She was in special education classes and never finished high school. She lives in a board-and-care home with two disabled women who are both blind and deaf, and her employment history only includes assembly work in a sheltered workshop. Church activities comprised her only social outlet. In our interviews and counseling sessions, we had judged her to have average or slightly below average intelligence. We were shocked when her scores on an IQ test adapted for the blind administered by a licensed psychometrist indicated an IQ of 63. By conventional standards, Deborah had limited learning ability and low employment potential. We knew intuitively that Deborah, although socially immature, did have greater academic and employment potential than indicated. We referred her to academic development classes sponsored by the college. With a lot of personal support, combined with her motivation to succeed, she recently acquired a high school equivalency diploma. She also has completed our intercept operator training program, passed the required job interview and physical, and is now waiting to be called for employment by Pacific Telephone.
- Peter, an above-average student who had completed high school, is very active in the National Federation for the Blind. In addition to his blindness, he also has Raynaud's disease, which limits his sense of touch and prevents him from being a good braille reader. Peter's test scores indicated an IQ of 79. Again, we concluded that his limitations were more social than intellectual, and enrolled him in our intercept operator program. His progress in training has been good, contrary to the prediction of his assessment scores.

Not all students participate in every step of this assessment process. Students who are well-motivated and have clear employment goals often go straight to job-related skill tests after the initial assessment interview. However, students who are unsure of their abilities and goals benefit greatly from going through some or all of the following activities.


• Assess Student's Job-Related Skills
– Indepth personal interview
– Performance of general tasks
– Enrollment in developmental classes
– Experiment with job tasks
– Job-related skill tests
– Standardized tests

Assessment Interview

Our first and most crucial assessment activity is an in-depth interview which takes place immediately after a student has expressed interest in a training program. Perhaps more important than the objective data obtained in the interview is our subjective analysis of a number of characteristics: self-understanding, motivation, enthusiasm, clarity, and appropriateness of work goals. Information covering eight separate areas that can be approached in any order is recorded on a simple interview form:

*1. **Education.*** What kind of schools has the student attended — regular or special schools? Did the student change schools? At what age? Why? What classes were taken — regular, special, or a combination? What classes were liked and disliked? Why? What was the highest grade completed and the grade point average? Any school-related extra-curricular activities? If yes, what skills or interests were developed? Would the student enjoy and do well in the academic portion of the training program?

*2. **Employment background.*** What skills have been acquired through paid and volunteer work? Which job duties were liked and disliked? Why? What was the student's relationship with fellow-workers and supervisors? How many absences per month? Why did the student leave each job?

*3. **Attitude toward disability.*** Does the student think the disability is a major handicap that completely limits social and employment choices? Is the student self-pitying? Acceptance of the disability? Is the student hopeful about personal and work goals?

*4. **Family's attitude toward disability.*** Do family members encourage dependence or independence? Does the family think the student will be able to or should work? How protective are family members? Has the family accepted and adjusted to the disability?

*5. **Economic effects of training or employment.*** Is the student receiving disability benefits (described in Chapter Six)? Psychological dependence on benefits? How long would individual benefit programs continue, at what level of support, during training and after job placement? What are the student's basic economic needs, and what is the minimum wage that would make employment advantageous?*

*6. **Disabling condition(s).*** Is the primary disability congenital? If not, what was the age of onset? Cause? What is the effect of the disability on independent living and on physical and mental functioning? Prognosis of condition(s)? Is the student taking any medication that would affect functioning in training or employment?

*7. **Recreational activities.*** What the student does in spare time is particularly important data for students who have no work experiences. What skills and aptitudes are indicated by these recreational activities?

*8. **Employment goal(s).*** Does the student have an employment goal? Social service or technical field? Local employment potential in this work area after training? What training or education is required to accomplish goal(s)? Does the student feel strongly enough about the work goal to invest the time and energy necessary to accomplish it? If the student doesn't have a goal, what occupational field or work role is interesting and possible?

The information and impressions obtained from this long and sometimes rambling interview form a preliminary picture of each student's level of motivation, independence, cognitive ability, and career awareness. Occasionally, this picture is so clear and complete that we immediately refer the student to one of our training programs or to a regular college program or counselor. However, if we or the student are uncertain about motivation, abilities, or goals, we proceed to the next step in the assessment process.

General Task Performance

Another indication of student motivation, interests, and abilities is obtained by requiring students to perform academic or job-related

tasks These tasks assignments may be simple or complex, and they are usually intended to test an area of uncertainty identified in the assessment interview. Examples of activities we have asked students to carry out at this state are:

- Write an outline of your resume and bring it to me.
- Visit a training class, evaluate what you see and hear, and then let's discuss what you think of that job.
- Talk with a student in a training class and then tell me what you think of that kind of job.
- Complete these forms and return them to me by next Tuesday.
- Listen to or read this book on career planning and be ready to talk about one of your marketable skills next week.
- Talk with your rehabilitation counselor about the training possibilities we've discussed today, and let me know what you've decided by next Wednesday.

These activities are not particularly risky for students, since they don't involve commitment to a certain plan; yet this simple assignment strategy accomplishes dual objectives. We are able to confirm, contradict, or clarify our initial picture of student ability, motivation, or goals; and students are able to learn more about themselves and specific employment possibilities. Depending on the information gathered at this stage, students either proceed to the next assessment step or enroll immediately in a training program they've observed.

Participation in Developmental Classes

Many of our students are so unsure of their academic skills and career goals that they simply cannot decide on a training or employment choice. We often refer undecided students to one or two of several types of developmental classes offered by the college each semester. Generally, such classes (described in detail in Chapter Seven) focus on career, personal, and academic development. Examples of class topics are: listening skills, self-assessment for career planning, assertiveness training, basic math for blind students, beginning typing, spelling through typing, introduction to data processing, preparation for the high school equivalency diploma test, reading, and language development. These classes are supported by general apportionment funds that are supplemented by Lanterman excess cost allowances.

Participation in such classes produces many positive results: students build self-confidence, strengthen valuable academic skills, and explore personal as well as career interests. We meet each month with the student and the class instructor. Both disabled and nondisabled adults attend many of these classes, so our students compete, learn, and socialize with a wide range of peers. Sometimes this mix of students is the first such experience for everyone. Whenever necessary, we provide special support services such as readers, brailled materials, interpreters, tutors, or whatever is necessary for the student to succeed in the class. We review student attendance and performance records to assess motivation, academic potential, and social readiness to begin an academic or training program.

Successful completion of one or more of these developmental activities often motivates students to enroll in other, more sophisticated and demanding classes. More than once, an academic success at this stage has stimulated a student to choose a career goal that involves acquiring more academic and technical skills. It is also not unusual for students to continue to enroll in academic classes concurrently with training classes. A little bit of success and personal self-confidence goes a long way at this academic exploration stage.

Vocational Experimentation

Most able-bodied adults have tried out one or two occupations by the time they are 21 or 22 years old: the adolescent paper route or neighborhood chores; clerking in a neighborhood store or for a fast food franchise; part-time work in construction, tutoring, or retail sales. These experiences expose young adults to different types of work — a process that influences long-term career choices. Not all young adults have clear, long-range career goals, but they generally have a glimmer of interest in a certain area and, if persistent, can get more employment experiences that clarify their initial interests.

Some counselors believe that career development is a haphazard, hit-and-miss process that is dependent on access to different kinds of work experience and complete, accurate information about the possibilities available. Choosing a career, according to other popular contemporary theories, is a scientific procedure that requires careful planning, sophisticated self-awareness, persistent research, and self-confident campaigning. Perhaps career choices (or the series of choices that adults make these days) *could* happen in this fashion if everyone were literate, articulate, and self-confident; but most peo-

ple just blunder through an almost unconscious process, taking advantage of some opportunities, not noticing others, deciding what they like to do, don't like to do, can do, and won't do.

Many disabled people are at a distinct disadvantage regarding both styles of career development — the scientific and the haphazard — primarily because they have not had access to a variety of work experiences or to good information about work possibilities. Many factors contribute to this problem: the physical or mental limitations of the disability; overprotective attitudes of friends and family members; and assumptions on the part of counselors and prospective employers about the employment potential of the disabled. Whatever the causes, the results are the same: many disabled adults have not had enough work experiences to compose even a short list of what they like to do and do not like to do; and disabled people are very likely to limit their occupational goals to social service fields instead of considering technical or business fields.

Our response to this problem is to encourage inexperienced and uncertain students to sample our training programs by attending one or two selected classes. Previous assessment activities have produced a clearer picture of career interests and skills, and participating in training activities lets students actually experiment with real job tasks without the risk of failure. As they are trying out realistic job choices, we meet with them frequently to encourage analysis of the experiment. Students may decide to continue with the training or explore other job options. In either case, they have added to their list of employment likes and dislikes; we then refer them to another training program or to developmental classes until a program that interests them is developed.

Job-Related Skill Tests

Before and during training classes — regardless of whether a student is sampling or training — we use several strategies to test specific job-related skills such as listening, spelling, long-term memory, manual dexterity, eye-hand coordination, typing, vocabulary, basic math, and business letter writing. If students do not possess the skills required to enter training or if problems develop during training, they are referred to other college-sponsored classes. Once general or job-related skills have been strengthened, students can apply again or continue with training.

Most of the job-related skill tests we use are brief informal adaptations of college-made or commercial tests. We have collected,

revised, and developed several tests for each training program, as illustrated by the following examples.

Word Processing for the blind. Performance on a language usage test and a five-minute timed writing test were entry requirements the first time this program was offered. Two of the first five totally blind students who entered the program had no problem learning how to apply word processing concepts. However, one student could not spell very well, which was a critical skill in transcribing audiotaped material. During one of our monthly student conferences, we talked with her about the spelling problem and the obstacle it presented to successful completion of training, even though she had been doing well in all other training areas. She arranged for tutoring in spelling the next day before her seven-hour a day word processing class. After four months of this rigorous daily tutoring and training routine, she was hired by the administrative word processing section of a local bank at $1,000 a month. She's been working for 18 months, and the bank staff are so pleased with her work that they have hired another of our blind word processing graduates.

The remaining two blind students in the first word processing class were unable to complete training because they could not remember the basic word processing concepts wihout continual reference to the printed (brailled) manual. Initially, we had not realized the importance of memory skills for blind students in this vocational area.

After analyzing the problems in this first class, we revised our entry requirements. Now applicants must demonstrate skills in vocabulary, memory (on an adaptation of the Weschler), basic math, spelling, typing, writing a business letter, and timed five-minute writings. Applicants who perform poorly in one or two areas are accepted into training but must take extra classes to strengthen their deficient areas. This allows students to supplement their training and does not eliminate those who have problems in only one or two areas. Students who perform poorly in several areas are referred to remediation classes and are invited to apply for training again at a later date. Many do, once they've improved their deficient skill areas.

Intercept Operator Program. Most applicants are blind. Four specific job-related skills are required for entry into this program:

a. good short-term memory for recalling intercepted phone calls. We test this skill in the assessment interview by asking students to correctly repeat 10-digit numbers;

b. good finger dexterity for speed and accuracy on the phone console, which resembles a 10-key adding machine. Formal tests are usually not necessary here, since spare-time activities discussed in the assessment interview often give evidence of sufficient manual dexterity;
c. a clear, easily understood voice and speech pattern, which is gauged in the assessment interview;
d. good listening skills, which can also be evaluated in an interview situation.

Since reading, writing, and math skills are not required for successful job performance, we do not test for them.

Most students who possess the above skills do well in training, and ongoing assessment determines whether additional support is necessary. One student easily passed our informal entry tests, but his speed and accuracy in transferring audiotaped numbers to a phone console did not increase after four months of training. After talking with him and observing him in the classroom, we concluded that he was relying on the little sight he had to find the correct numbers, instead of learning how to use the console by touch. Jokingly, we threatened to blindfold him. That half-threat was enough to make him turn his head away from the console. Within a month, his speed and accuracy had increased dramatically, and he has been referred to Pacific Telephone for the initial employment interview and physical.

Welding Program. One of our learning-disabled students who is very sensitive about not being able to read wanted to be a welder. We encouraged him to enroll in a welding program offered by another college in our district, and we promised to work closely with him and the welding instructor. The student made good progress until the instructor assigned a self-paced book on how to read blueprints. The student was afraid to tell the instructor that he couldn't read.

At our monthly conference, the welding instructor expressed his concern about the student's lack of progress in blueprint reading. With permission, we discussed the student's learning disability with the instructor, who stated that not knowing how to read did not present a major problem; the instructor would just explain what the symbols meant and how to read the prints. The student completed the trainining program and is now employed as a welder.

Monthly Counseling Conferences

Assessment for each of our training programs involves the specific job-related skills described in these three examples, but other

employment readiness skills are assessed and evaluated during monthly training team meetings. The training team consists of the project's assessment counselor, the training class instructor, and the student. The employment readiness skills we look for include: getting along with peers and supervisors, ability to handle constructive criticism, listening, grooming, punctuality, and attendance.

Monthly training team meetings permit a regular evaluation of student and instructor goals, expectations, and performance. Together, we are able to identify and discuss problems before they become unmanageable, and students get valuable feedback on what they're doing right and wrong. All team members collaborate to create flexible solutions to performance and expectation problems. Without this ongoing assessment and problem-solving mechanism, it is very likely that many of our students would not successfully complete training.

Standardized Tests

We regard general and specific standardized tests as a *way of learning how to take tests,* not as a way of eliminating students from training opportunities. We rarely use IQ tests or general aptitude tests, and only portions of specific reading, math, or special aptitude tests are used occasionally to diagnose whether students will be able to complete the training activities and perform the required job tasks after placement. However, we also emphasize that test-taking is a valuable skill, and we offer a class in which students can take as many standardized tests as they wish.

This test-taking class emphasizes that the experience of taking a test is often more valuable than the test results. A list of the standardized tests available to students in this class is included at the end of this manual. Occasionally such tests produce new information about students; but usually the results either confirm what we already know or are discounted by our personal evaluation of student abilities and potentials. We advise students to compare standardized test scores with the results of other, more informal assessment strategies.

Summary

Vocational assessment is a high-stress activity for most of our disabled students. Consequently, we use formal and informal assessment strategies that decrease anxiety *and* produce reliable, accurate data. We have developed an ongoing, eclectic, individualized assessment process that begins when students express interest in a training

program and ends only after they are placed in jobs. The stages in this assessment process are:

1. an initial in-depth interview that covers eight major areas of information;
2. evaluation of general task performance for motivation, ability, and interests;
3. evaluation of performance in developmental classes to build self-confidence and clarify interests;
4. vocational experimentation to see whether a training program is a good choice;
5. job-related skill tests both before and during training to assure successful training and job performance; and
6. general and specific standardized tests, primarily to learn how to take tests.

Depending on motivation and the clarity of employment goals, students participate in one or several of these activities after the initial assessment interview. During training, monthly meetings of a training team consisting of the project's assessment counselor, the training instructor, and the student provide immediate and constructive feedback on progress. These assessment activities tend to include rather than eliminate students from our training programs.

Chapter Six

DISABILITY BENEFITS AND TRAINING

Another aspect of the assessment process is a careful analysis of how the training program and eventual job placement will affect each student's disability benefits. Most disabled unemployed adults receive some form of ongoing financial support from the government in the form of State Disability Insurance (SDI), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), and/or Medicare/Medical. In the past, regulations governing these special programs have discouraged and often penalized disabled adults who participated in training and employment programs. Disincentives inherent in the regulations led to uncertainty and anxiety about working or participating in training programs. Our typical students — disabled adults who are naive about the world of work, unsure about occupational goals, and possessed of very few marketable skills — are especially fearful of losing their financial benefits and access to special services if they are not successful in a particular training or placement situation.

Naturally, the financial concerns of students significantly affect our recruitment and enrollment activities. We discuss disability benefits during intake and assessment interviews. These pre-enrollment discussions have three objectives: 1) to gather information about present eligibility for benefits and level of support; 2) to advise students of recent changes in disability benefit regulations that reduce or eliminate previous disincentives to work, and 3) to advise students of the effects that training and successful or unsuccessful job placement will have on disability benefits.

Several typical questions related to previous regulations usually come up in initial student interviews. For example:

"Will my benefits stop when I start a pre-employment or training program?"

- No, starting a training or pre-employment program will not cause the loss of any services you receive under Title XX, including medical services or cash payments.

"Will my benefits stop after a trial work period or right when I begin working?"

- Not necessarily. There have been some recent changes in Social Security and other disability regulations that let you keep a portion of your

benefits even beyond the previous nine-month trial work period. Because of these changes, disability benefits may not stop suddenly and completely, as they did in the past.

"What if I'm earning less money on a job after I pay for disability-related expenses than I would get in benefits alone?"

- In some cases, regulations allow you to deduct disability-related expenses from your earnings, and your cash benefits are based on this adjusted net income figure.

"What if this job doesn't work out? Can I get back on disability benefits easily?"

- It used to take six months to a year to reinstate disability benefits; now you are automatically reinstated if any work attempt is unsuccessful.

The undercurrent of anxiety in these questions is quite strong in our students. Under the old regulations, disability benefits often stopped abruptly and were very difficult to reinstate. In some cases, such provisions actually discouraged rehabilitation and a return to work. Some adults were reluctant to enter a training or placement program, even when potential earnings would have been well above the value of lost benefits; the fear that work attempts might fail was intensified by the delay and uncertainty of regaining eligibility for cash and medical benefits. Fortunately, recent changes in the law have decreased or eliminated these work disincentives for the disabled.

Changes in Benefit Regulations

The 1980 Disability Amendments to the Social Security Act established a three-year pilot test of a process by which cash and medical support is gradually withdrawn as disabled adults acquire successful work experiences and higher incomes. The intent of the new amendments is to get more disabled workers back into the labor market. Benefits will be withdrawn slowly in stages as disabled workers gain more confidence and experience in supporting themselves. These revised regulations, which will be in effect until 1983, do seem to encourage rather than discourage employment.

The following paragraphs outline the essence of the recent changes in benefit regulations. We realize that this is a very complicated subject. Regulations vary greatly according to individual circumstances, and we may have oversimplified the law in an effort to alert you to the most significant changes. After reviewing this outline, analyze individual cases carefully by consulting with students and their social service counselors.

Eligibility for Benefits. Eligibility requirements for different benefit programs have not changed significantly. The following brief outline gives general eligibility requirements for the major programs:

- ***State Disability Insurance (SDI)*** eligibility is earned by working for a certain period of time and contributing to the state disability fund. Benefits are administered by the State Employment Development Department.
- ***Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)*** eligibility is earned by working for a certain number of quarters in a job where employers and employees contribute to federal Social Security funds. Amount of benefits is determined by age and gross earnings when disabled.
- ***Supplemental Security Income (SSI)*** is available to the aged and disabled, and eligibility is determined on the basis of an income test, not by contributions during employment periods.
- ***Medicare*** is available to retired and disabled adults who have contributed Social Security funds. Catastrophic and routine health care is covered, with no income test.
- ***Medicaid*** (known as MediCal in California) provides all health care to low-income residents regardless of previous work history.

Loss of Benefits. Eligibility for benefits is associated with inability to engage in substantial gainful activity (SGA) due to a disability for at least one year. Substantial gainful activity is a nationally uniform income level; if adults earn more than this SGA figure, they lose benefit eligibility. In addition, disabilities that are not permanent are re-evaluated periodically to determine eligibility for benefits; if adults are no longer considered disabled, they are ineligible for further benefits.

Deduction of Impairment-Related Work Expenses. Any money a disabled person spends for attendant care, medical devices, equipment, prostheses, or similar items and services necessary for working may be deducted from gross earnings. Earned income is adjusted for these work-related expenses before benefit levels are determined. For people who receive SSI, this deduction is allowed after figuring net income and eligibility. For people not on SSI who intend to file for benefits at a later time, these work-related expense deductions can be used only if the person's countable income (without deductions) is low enough to qualify for SSI and state supplemental

payments. This portion of the new regulations is a permanent change and not part of the special three-year pilot test.

Automatic Re-Entitlement to Benefits. The individual's status as a disabled person has been extended for 15 months after the end of the nine-month trial work period, as long as the person is still disabled. Eligibility for Social Security benefits is automatically extended for this extra 15-month period. Therefore, if a person's SSI or SSDI payments have been stopped because of substantial earnings, that person can be automatically reinstated to receive payments if the work attempt is unsuccessful. This portion of the new amendments will be evaluated for change or continuation in 1983.

Extension of Medicare Coverage. Under the new regulations, Medicare coverage has been extended for two years after the end of the automatic re-entitlement period described above. Therefore, Medicare coverage can now continue for three years after cash payments stop, which is usually a year after an individual has started working. The purpose of extending Medicare coverage for four years after the disabled individual's return to work is to allow time for the worker to adjust and to make arrangements for medical coverage through an employer's group plan or an alternate method. This aspect of the new regulations will be in effect until 1983.

Waiver of Second Medicare Waiting Period. Previously, a person whose eligibility for cash benefits and medical coverage had run out was required to wait 24 months before becoming eligible for medical coverage again. This long waiting period has been eliminated until 1983 by the new regulations. If a work attempt fails, the disabled person is immediately eligible for medical care, regardless of when previous benefits were stopped.

Special Work Incentive Project. The new regulations also include a special three-year national demonstration project to encourage SSI disability recipients to return to work. Members of Congress will be looking closely at the results of this demonstration project to see if it should be made a part of the SSI law. For the next three years, the special project will provide special cash benefits if the recipient has completed the nine-month trial work period and is earning enough for their employment to be considered substantial gainful activity. If individuals receive these special payments, they will continue to be

eligible for MediCal even if their earnings are high enough to stop SSI payments, as long as they: 1) continue to be blind or disabled, 2) would be eligible for SSI payments if they weren't working, 3) would have to stop work if they lost MediCal and 4) do not earn enough to provide an equivalent of SSI/SSP payments and MediCal.

Additional Work Incentives. The new law has additional work incentives that affect only a small number of people: 1) the nine-month trial work period, previously only for disabled workers, has been extended to disabled widows and widowers getting Social Security disability payments; and 2) Social Security and SSI disability benefits (and vocational rehabilitation services) will continue even after medical recovery for those in an approved vocational rehabilitation program if a) the medical recovery was not anticipated and b) continuing the benefits will increase the likelihood that the individual will remain off special Social Security benefits permanently.

Implications for Counseling

These new benefit regulations greatly decrease the economic risk attached to participation in a training or placement program. Disabled people who are afraid they will not be able to get and keep good jobs will be reassured by the fact that they are now eligible for almost four years of various benefits after starting a new job. Consequently, counseling disabled adults about employment possibilities has been made much easier.

Getting complete and accurate information about the new benefit regulations may be a difficult task, however. Local Social Security and vocational rehabilitation personnel may not yet have complete instructions on the new rules. We advise you to be cheerfully persistent as you search for a knowledgeable contact in each of these local agencies. If you are unable to find a person within the Social Security or rehabilitation bureaucracy who can answer your questions, we advise you to contact a formal advocate agency for the disabled. The Center for Independent Living in Berkeley has established a disability rights information service that can be reached at (415) 644-2555.

The purpose of gathering information from students and local social service agencies is to help students make an *informed choice* about enrollment in a training or placement program. In many cases

we have acted as student advocates by consulting with rehabilitation counselors, helping students complete appropriate paperwork, and even doing some individual research to track down eligibility rules.

Summary

Analyzing how participation in a training and placement program will affect a student's disability benefits is another aspect of our assessment process. In the past, work disincentives inherent in the major benefit programs made some disabled adults, particularly our typical students, fearful of enrolling in education or training because benefits often stopped suddenly and completely as a result of successful or even unsuccessful work attempts. The 1980 Disability Amendments to the Social Security Act established a three-year pilot test of a gradual withdrawal of benefits as disabled adults acquire work experience and earn higher incomes. Regulation changes include: ability to deduct impairment-related work expenses when determining benefit levels; automatic re-entitlement to benefits for two years after beginning to work; extension of Medicare coverage for four years after beginning to work; waiver of the second Medicare waiting period to regain health care coverage; and special work incentive projects. If local Social Security personnel do not have complete information about these new regulations, check with an advocacy center for the disabled in your area.

Chapter Seven

DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Developmental education — classes that strengthen academic, personal, and career skills — plays an especially important role in the project's vocational counseling approach. Many of our adult students are not ready to begin a training program due to unclear employment goals and/or weak communication and learning skills. Additionally, many have had a history of failure in academic settings. For these students, the successful completion of a college-level class represents a personal milestone and also accomplishes three objectives:

1. students who have been away from school for some time acquire academic self-confidence and brush up on crucial learning skills, (e.g., managing time, studying, reading, and writing);
2. taking a nonvocational class, (e.g., in local history, art, or current affairs) often exposes students to new ideas and new experiences that expand or clarify personal and work goals; and
3. student performance in these general classes is an excellent indicator of ability and motivation, and often provides more comprehensive assessment data than a series of formal tests.

Students attend two types of developmental classes before and during training: *general credit and noncredit classes* that every college offers regularly; and *special classes* developed for a certain student population or objective. To help students be successful in both types of classes, we encourage them to choose manageable classes, and we meet individually with them on a regular basis to analyze their progress.

General college classes that accomplish developmental objectives include:

assertiveness training
arts and crafts
basic reading and writing
biological aspects of aging
career planning
computer literacy
creative writing
current events
environmental issues
local history
interior design
listening skills
math phobia management
nutrition
study skills
vocabulary development

In addition to general classes that accomplish exploration and assessment objectives, many of our students also participate in special classes designed to strengthen academic skills and self-confidence. The following sections describe two special classes we have developed: GED Preparation and Math for the Blind.

GED Preparation

GED is the acronym for the process by which a student can receive a high school equivalency certificate by passing a six-hour General Educational Development (GED) test administered by a state-approved agency. A GED certificate usually satisfies high school graduation requirements for employment, training, and college enrollment. This preparation and testing is traditionally the province of local adult education agencies, but the Peralta District is one of the few California community college districts approved to administer the GED test.

The test is comprised of multiple-choice items in five broad content areas: *social studies,* including world and American history, government, and economics; *natural sciences,* including earth science, biology, chemistry, and physics; *English literature,* including drama, poetry, and prose; *English usage,* including punctuation, grammar, and spelling; and *mathematics,* including general math, elementary algebra, and informal geometry.

We focus on preparing disabled students for the GED test for three reasons: it is a realistic, attractive goal for many students; reading and thinking about all five content areas exposes academically inexperienced students to a wide variety of skills, events, and beliefs that often expand personal and career interests; and GED test scores, when carefully analyzed, are excellent predictors of career interests and academic potential.

In developing GED preparation and testing procedures for disabled students, we discovered that the test can be administered in four different forms: in regular print, in enlarged print, in braille, and on audio-cassette. These testing variations, which are unfamiliar to many counselors, make test-taking much easier for students who are visually, perceptually, or physically handicapped. Kim Edwards at the Bureau of School Approvals in Sacramento can provide more information on GED test administration procedures for disabled students.

The instructional format and curriculum materials of our special GED preparation classes also accommodate student disabilities. A

general preparation class for all five content areas is taught by an instructor and two aides for 15 hours a week during the semester. Students can enter and leave this class whenever they wish during the semester (i.e., open entry/open exit), which means that highly motivated students can prepare for the test in a relatively short, intensive time period. Audio-taped curriculum materials have been prepared for the class by the Clearing House in Sacramento and by the Volunteers of Vacaville. Brailled study materials have been prepared by the American Red Cross. The college uses Lanterman excess cost funds to pay for the two classroom aides and other support services, (e.g., closed circuit television, Perkins braillers and paper, abaci, readers, and interpreters).

During the first semester that this class was offered, 14 disabled students passed their GED tests. Before participating in the GED program, these 14 had experienced repeated failures in school and work situations. They weren't interested in going to school and had stopped looking for jobs. Earning high school equivalency diplomas has led to remarkable changes in their attitudes and goals. Twelve of the 14 are currently enrolled at one of the colleges in our district, pursuing occupational certificates or general college degrees, and competing very well with their classmates. The other two students are employed: one as an electronics assembler and one as a postal clerk.

We will continue to offer this special GED preparation and testing opportunity each semester because it is an excellent motivational and learning experience for disabled students. Passsing the GED test is a personal accomplishment that convinces many students of their ability to succeed. This increase in self-confidence in turn often encourages them to select broader, more demanding personal and career goals.

Math for the Blind

We developed a special math course for blind students primarily because 1) 95 percent of the blind students who enroll in math classes in our district do not finish them, and 2) many emerging vocational opportunities in computer-related fields that are appropriate for blind persons require an understanding of mathematical concepts.

Our special math class, developed with a State-funded Instructional Improvement Grant, uses kinesthetic materials and strategies to teach math concepts and skills. The curriculum covers number

theory, whole numbers, fractions, decimals, and percentages. Manipulative materials let blind students "feel" math concepts. In addition, the appropriate Nemith Code symbols (braille symbols for math that are distinctly different from regular braille) are introduced with each new math concept. Knowing the Nemith Code is essential for students who want to learn more than basic math, since all brailled higher mathematics texts use the Nemith Code.

Blind students in this class acquire the basic skills and self-confidence necessary to go on to more sophisticated math classes required for occupational certificates and advanced degrees. One of the disabled students who helped develop this class is now a computer programmer. Another student used the class to fulfill the math requirement for an A.A. degree he'll receive this year; yet another acquired enough self-confidence and skills to attempt some upper-division math requirements for her State University degree.

This math class was developed and pilot-tested with special funds over a six-month time period. The course syllabus and student handbook are available from Vista College for the cost of duplication.

Summary

Disabled students who are not ready for training often enroll in academic, career, and personal development classes to build self-confidence and to expand personal and career goals. Students usually participate in general developmental classes offered by most colleges; occasionally, we develop academic or pre-vocational classes especially for disabled students. Our General Educational Development (GED) preparation and testing program is an example of a special class that strengthens academic skills, motivates disabled students to attempt more demanding academic and career activities, and produces reliable data on career interests and academic potential. Math for the Blind is another special developmental class. When referring students to developmental classes, we urge them to choose classes that are manageable and will also satisfy specific assessment and exploration objectives.

Chapter Eight

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Our primary goal is to place disabled workers in competitive jobs in the private sector, and we want each placement to be a positive experience for the employer and for the student. The union-college-employer partnership developed for each of our training programs sets the stage for good placements, but we've discovered that several types of supportive services for both employers and students increase the odds that placements will work out well. The following sections describe the supportive activities we provide before and after placement. The goals of these supplemental activities are:

1. to sensitize potential employers and co-workers to the capabilities and needs of disabled workers;
2. to train students in some of the academic, career planning, and social skills necessary for getting and keeping a job; and
3. to make sure that supervisors and new workers are satisfied with the placements.

Employer Education Activities

Many people have misconceptions about the abilities of the disabled, primarily because of lack of contact. In particular, employers and supervisors, who are concerned with seeing that work is accomplished correctly and efficiently, often have stereotypical attitudes about hiring the disabled. Some common misconceptions are that disabled workers are not ambitious; they are safety hazards; they can't learn new skills and will therefore stack up in entry-level jobs; and that they are so demanding to work with that only one should be placed in an individual firm. Most people quickly discard these attitudes when presented with clear facts or examples demonstrating that disabled workers possess the full range of human attributes — from laziness to ambition, from limited to superior learning ability. In all of our discussions with employers, we try to transmit information that will remove labels and orient people toward looking first at the skills of each person, rather than at the disability.

Misconceptions regarding disabled workers are confronted prior to placement through *individual, informal discussions with employers and coworkers.* The informal discussion approach is an integral part of

preliminary talks with employers to define the training and placement partnership. We strive to establish a comfortable atmosphere where concerns can be easily expressed. We expect employers and supervisors to have questions about the implications of hiring disabled workers, and sensitive issues must be addressed openly before conditional job offers are made and placements begin.

The following comments illustrate some typical concerns about disabled workers. Obviously, the context of the question — the variety of job, the size and type of firm, and the nature of the disability — influences the responses; therefore, we've included several possible reactions to different concerns:

"We can't hire disabled workers because we can't afford the physical accommodations that would be necessary."

- Most physical accommodations involve minor modifications that can be made easily and quickly: brailled doorway and directional markers for the blind, an elevated drafting table or desk for wheelchair accessibility, a dixie cup dispenser below the water fountain, or reassignment of nonessential work duties such as filing in high cabinets.
- The job requirements will be matched with the physical abilities of our students so that minimum accommodations will be required.

"Disabled employees would be dead-ended in entry-level jobs because they couldn't learn new skills necessary to advance."

- People are people; some learn quickly and easily, and some don't. A disability affects lifestyle but only mental disabilities affect learning potential. Some disabled employees, like their nondisabled peers, will be capable of advancement; some won't.
- We'll be sure to place disabled people with a normal range of employment potential in your organization.

"If we were to hire disabled workers, we'd never be able to fire them if they didn't work out."

- If you have good personnel procedures that include adequate warning and feedback systems, then use those procedures to deal with disabled employees as you would with anyone else. If your personnel procedures are sound, you'll have no problem with discrimination suits.
- It is a mistake to give disabled workers a free ride, to retain them because you're trying to be nice. They won't learn how to be productive, competent workers, and your other employees will be resentful.

"Disabled people might not be dependable enough. My people have to be here every day on time; we don't have time for people being sick or slow."

- Don't assume that disabled employees will be sick frequently or work

more slowly than other employees. We'll recruit applicants who want to work and who have good work habits and all the required skills.

- They will have good days and bad days, just like all employees. If the bad days far outnumber the good days, counsel, document, and then, if necessary, fire them — as you would for anyone else.
- Many people compensate for their physical or mental disabilities by being more punctual, more responsible, and more productive than the average employee.

"If we hire disabled applicants, they'll have more accidents and increase our insurance premiums."

- Research at Sears and DuPont indicates that disabled workers actually have fewer accidents and better safety records than nondisabled employees. Depending on the disability, they're accustomed to being careful as they work.
- It's illegal for insurance companies to raise premiums solely because of the physical/mental characteristics of employees. Insurance payments are based on the commonly accepted risk factor of an occupation and the accident history of an organization.

"My office managers don't have the time to give disabled employees the extra supervision and special attention they need."

- Most disabled employees won't need a lot of special attention. They, like all employees, need clear directions and consistent positive/negative feedback.
- We'll screen and train people so they are able and willing to work in your firm; if your managers use good supervisory techniques, there shouldn't be any problems.

"Sure, it's easy for the boss to say that we'll hire disabled people, but I'm the one who's got to supervise this section, and I don't want any extra trouble."

- It sounds as if you're anxious about this new program. Why don't you come over to our training class at a time convenient for you, and you can observe our students and talk to our instructors.
- Once you get to know some of our people, I think you'll be reassured that they won't be any extra trouble. Just treat them like everyone else once they're on the job. Be as fair and demanding as you are with other employees.

In talks with union officials and employers, we usually encounter at least one of these issues. If they don't appear readily, we bring them to the surface so that a sensitization and learning process can begin. Our responses, as noted above, emphasize that there are as many differences in attitudes and skills among disabled people as

there are among the nondisabled population. We focus on facts that refute stereotypical attitudes, and we discuss the damaging effects of most labels on people's lives. Above all, we encourage employers to observe and talk with some of our students, an experience that rapidly dispels any lingering misconceptions about the disabled. We assure employers that we'll screen, train, and refer disabled applicants who can and will do the work required. That assurance, coupled with our openness in addressing sensitive issues, usually eliminates or alleviates any misgivings employers may have about hiring the disabled.

Another, more formal sensitization approach is the presentation of a *disability awareness class for employers, personnel staff, supervisors, and/or workers in a specific organization.* This class approach is a particularly efficient learning technique, since we can present facts and talk candidly with a cross-section of personnel who will be interacting with disabled applicants and workers. Class discussions cover the many meanings of the word "disability," as well as related socio-legal topics. We've offered this experience informally as a three-hour meeting and also as a nine-hour college class for one-half unit of credit. Topics covered in both versions of the class include: the four major classes of disabilities; the employer requirements in Sections 503 and 504 of the 1973 Federal Rehabilitation Act; what is meant by a qualified handicapped applicant; the issue of physical and/or work accommodations; and elements of good supervision.

Individual discussions and awareness classes are the two major employer education activities that we use to orient people to focus first on the person and not the disability. These activities make people more aware of the capabilities and needs of the disabled, and we think that our consistent, open approach to changing stereotypical attitudes has contributed to the success rate of our placements.

Student Support Services

Support services in conventional vocational counseling programs may cover a wide range of activities that are directly or indirectly related to training and placement: e.g., child care, legal advice, special transportation, medical assistance, academic tutoring, and training in independent living skills. When we were developing our program, we had to make some hard choices about what kinds of services to provide for students in addition to actual work skills training. We decided to emphasize supportive services that strengthened academic and career planning skills because 1) the college did not

have the facilities or personnel to provide non-educational services, 2) the East Bay region already contained numerous social service groups and agencies that were able to take referrals, and 3) concentrating on job-related skills complemented our primary training and placement goals. Consequently, we now refer students who have medical, legal, child care, or serious emotional problems to local social service agencies; we concentrate on offering supplemental academic and career planning experiences that will prepare students for entry and graduation from our training programs.

Our career and academic support focus also reflects the philosophy that successful placement really depends on several stages of "employment readiness." For example, at various points in the development of a training program we check to insure that employers, supervisors, and co-workers are ready to accept and work with disabled applicants; we verify with employers that our training component will produce people who are ready to work in their organization; and we make sure that our students have acquired the necessary academic, social, and career planning skills that make them ready to get and keep the jobs we've identified.

Since the college does not provide a full range of conventional support services, we demand that students be ready (or almost ready) to work before acceptance into a training program. Students who are referred to community resources are assured that they can reapply for admission in the future. When they return to us — and they often do return because of the incentive of a real job offer — we are then able to concentrate on training and job-related support services.

The *academic support services* provided to students are described completely in Chapter Seven, "Developmental Activities." Very briefly, students who are not ready for our training programs are advised to enroll in several different kinds of college-sponsored academic and pre-employment skills classes.

The project's *career planning services* are delivered through college-sponsored classes, individual sessions with students, and as part of our training programs. The college's career planning classes cover a fairly conventional array of topics such as:

- clarification of personal and work values and goals
- standardized and informal career interest inventories
- assertiveness training
- researching job requirements and duties
- preparing a resume or personal data form

- job-search strategies
- interview skills
- filling out application forms
- taking employment tests
- job retention strategies

The flexible instructional format of the college's career-planning classes allows for wide variability in student skills and goals. Generally, the above topics are divided into a sequence of four one-unit, short-term learning modules that are offered at different times during the semester. With the help of a counselor or by reading a description of the career planning sequence in the college schedule, students decide which module best fits their individual levels of career development. The college offers these classes at various community sites and at the Oakland office of the Department of Rehabilitation. Often a combination of disabled and nondisabled students enroll in the same class. Curriculum materials used in these classes include commercially-developed tests and exercises as well as exercises that have been developed by local counselors and teachers.

Many students with good communication and self-assessment skills are referred to college-sponsored career planning classes, but individualized career counseling occurs at each stage of our program. Through individualized interviews and informal interest inventories, we determine how much our students know about different employment possibilities and whether they have a clear idea of what kind of work they could and would like to do. Intially, many say that they just want to work and do not have job preferences. Often our training programs serve as a career exploration menu, since we encourage "sampling" a training program to learn more about the work involved. If individualized counseling shows that a student is not suited to any of our training programs or cannot develop a specific employment goal, the student is directed to wait for an appropriate training program. Usually we recommend that such students enroll in an academic skills course or a career planning course while they wait for additional training/employment choices.

Career planning activities are also an integral part of our training programs. Each training program has a career planning component that may emphasize preparing a personal data sheet, filling out a job application, taking employment tests, participating in mock interviews, or getting along with coworkers. Training activities are organized so that students practice these career skills as they learn

the required work skills. The following example of the way students prepare for job interviews in the intercept operator training program illustrates how career planning can be integrated into training.

Whenever possible, we arrange ways for our graduates to circumvent the traditional application and interview process by demonstrating their work habits and skills to prospective employers. Occasionally, however, an employer will insist upon formal job interviews even though written tests or other application procedures have been waived. For instance, graduates of our intercept operator training program with visual disabilities are excused from taking Pacific Telephone's general written employment tests, but our graduates are required to go through a formal job interview. As the last stage of training before referral to the Pacific Telephone recruiter, each of our prospective graduates completes at least one mock interview which is videotaped and critiqued.

The mock interviews are as realistic as possible. After appropriate interview behaviors are discussed and modeled in the training class, prospective applicants must call a project staff member or a special telephone company consultant to arrange a time and place for the practice interview. The recruiter role is played by someone who does not know the applicant well; interviews take place at the college offices or at the office of the project's union consultant. Applicants must get to the interview on their own, on time, dressed appropriately, and with their resumes or personal data forms. The "interviewer" asks typical recruiter questions — some easy and some difficult — about the "applicant's" previous work experiences, ability to do the job, and future career goals. Applicants try to act and react in a confident, complete and accurate manner. The whole interchange, which takes about a half-hour, is videotaped.

A careful review of this videotape provides the student with feedback on verbal and nonverbal behaviors. It is not reviewed immediately; a day (or even a week) later, the student and a project staff member critique the videotape together. During the review session, students often realize that they had looked terrified, or had not described their previous work experience positively, or had answered a direct question with a long, rambling story. The importance of short, direct, complete, accurate answers is emphasized by the project staff member, who also urges students to consider what they should have said or how they should have acted. If necessary, another mock interview is scheduled, videotaped, and critiqued. Stu-

dents are not referred to the actual telephone recruiter until they are competent interviewees.

To summarize briefly, students are referred to college-sponsored career planning and academic development classes both before and during training. A project counselor also works individually with them in these two support areas, and each training program includes a career planning component. We emphasize career planning and academic support services because competence in these skill areas increases the probability that students will be able to get and keep the jobs we've identified. We have sold our training approach to employers who have agreed to hire qualified disabled applicants, but our graduates must still demonstrate the job-related skills necessary to be competitive applicants and good workers.

Post-Placement Activities

Following placement, we regularly contact the new employee and the employer representative at least once a month for three months and then once more six months after placement. When talking with new employees after placement, we probe to determine whether they understand their assignments, can do the work, and are getting along with their co-workers. If we sense that problems in work skills or attitudes exist, we meet immediately with the people involved. Most problems, once they're objectively identified, can be resolved if everyone — employee, co-workers, and supervisor — is willing to cooperate. Many problems are caused by simple misunderstandings, but in a very few cases, a placement just doesn't work out. The student is then referred to another of our training programs or to the Department of Rehabilitation.

Two major types of employer-related problems have surfaced after many post-placement conferences: *protective attitudes* on the part of employers who are less demanding of disabled workers, and *ineffective supervisory skills* on the part of employers who do not give clear directions and accurate feedback to disabled workers. In a well-intended effort to make a placement succeed, many employers and supervisors ignore the fact that a new disabled employee is not working up to the standard required of other new employees. Supervisors and co-workers compensate for the work not being done or being done incorrectly, and everyone participates in a conspiracy of silence to avoid hurting the feelings of the disabled worker. Eventually the situation explodes, as in the following example.

We placed a disabled person in a fairly unskilled position: delivering interoffice mail. The supervisor and co-workers thought they were well prepared to "deal with a handicapped person." They were enthusiastic about making the placement a successful one. The new employee took a little longer than usual to learn the names of office personnel, but co-workers decided to be helpful and rerouted mail after it had been delivered to the wrong desks. Therefore, the new employee thought he was doing a good job because nobody mentioned the wrong deliveries. And when we called the supervisor to see how the new employee was doing, the response was: "He's great . . . no problems . . . it's working out . . . he's very well liked . . . we want to make it work." When the mail was still not being delivered correctly after six weeks, the supervisor and co-workers could no longer maintain this magnanimous protective attitude because rerouting the mail was interfering with their work. Suddenly we were called and told: "Get this person out of here . . . it's not working out . . . we can't possibly maintain this any longer." This problem was a complete surprise to us.

In talks with the supervisor in this situation (and in general discussions with prospective employers), we stress the importance of giving clear and consistent feedback to all employees, but especially to disabled employees. We emphasize that disabled employees need to be treated exactly the same as others and that all employees need to be told when they're doing something wrong and when they're doing something right. Clear directions and constructive, consistent feedback are especially important to a disabled person who may have a diminished mental capability or may not know much about typical work environments. Without clear directions and a chance to ask questions, these people may misunderstand their assignments; without constructive feedback, they won't know what they're doing wrong. Trying to be nice to disabled employees by ignoring good supervisory techniques is a mistake, and we try to confront that problem before it materializes. If the problem occurs after placement, we counsel the supervisor and the employee: the supervisor is encouraged to be fair and demanding and to give clear feedback, and the new employee is encouraged to ask questions that clarify work assignments.

Summary

All of our support services are directly related to increasing the odds that each job placement will be successful. Through individual

discussions or disability awareness classes, we sensitize potential employers, supervisors, and co-workers to look beyond a person's disability and focus instead on job skills and attitudes. Our students strengthen their academic and career planning skills through individual counseling sessions and college-sponsored classes. Each training program includes a career planning component. Students who have serious emotional, family, medical, or transportation problems are referred to other colleges or community-based support programs, with the understanding that a place in one of our training programs and a conditional job offer will be available when they're ready. After placement, both employers and employees are contacted regularly to see whether employers are being fair and demanding, and to determine whether new employees understand and can carry out their work assignement.

APPENDIX

Standardized Tests

Listed below are the standardized tests we have made available to students. Additional assessment material and information regarding administration procedures can be found in the following manuals: *Career Advisement with the Disabled,* published by Mesa Community College, Mesa, Arizona; *Five-H: Formula for Improving Vocational Education for the Handicapped Phase II,* published by Vocational and Career Education Service Section, California State Department of Education, Sacramento, California; and *Vocational Skills Assessment for Disabled Students,* published by Chaffey Community College, Alta Loma, California. Publishers and their addresses are included at the end of this list:

Achievement Tests

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test
American Guidance Service, Inc.

Peabody Individual Achievement Test
American Guidance Service, Inc.

Stanford Achievement Test
Bureau of Educational Research and Services
Braille and *Large Print:* American Printing House for the Blind

Stanford Test of Academic Skills (task)
Bureau of Educational Research and Services
Braille and *Large Print:* American Printing House for the Blind

Wide Range Achievement Test
Psychological Corporation

Durrell Listening Reading Series
Bureau of Educational Research and Services
Braille and *Large Print:* American Printing House for the Blind

TMR School Competency Skills
Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc.

California Achievement Test
CTB/McGraw-Hill
Large Print only: American Printing House for the Blind

Fundamental Achievement Series
Psychological Corporation

SRA Reading-Arithmetic Index
Science Research Associates, Inc.

Aptitude Tests

Pennsylvania By-Manual Work Sample
American Guidance Service, Inc.

Minnesota Rate of Manipulation Tests
American Guidance Service, Inc.

Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude
Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing Company

Subsumed Abilities — Measure of Learning Efficiency
Martin M. Bruce, Publishers

Employee Aptitude Survey
Educational and Industrial Testing Service

Crawford Small Parts Dexterity Tests
Psychological Corporation

Revised Minnesota Paper Form Board Test
Psychological Corporation

Differential Aptitude Test
Psychological Corporation

Wechsler Memory Skill
Psychological Corporation

Purdue Peg Board
Science Research Associates

SRA Nonverbal Test
Science Research Associates

SRA Pictorial Reasoning Test
Science Research Associates

O'Conner Finger Dexterity Test
Stoelting

Minnesota Rate of Manipulation Test
Stoelting

Intelligence Tests

Culture Fair Intelligence Test
Educational and Industrial Testing Service

Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale
Psychological Corporation

Revised Beta Examination
Psychological Corporation

Haptic Intelligence Scale
Stoelting

Leiter Adult Intelligence Scale
Stoelting

Interest Tests

Self-Directive Search
Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc.

California Occupational Preference System
Educational and Industrial Testing Service

Career Ability Placement Survey
Educational and Industrial Testing Service

Vocational Interest and Sophistication Assessment
Ohio State University — Nisonger Center

Knowledge of Occupations
Psychologists and Educators, Inc.

How Well Do You Know Your Interests?
Psychologists and Educators, Inc.

Edwards Personal Preference Schedule
Psychological Corporation

Kuder Preference Record
Science Research Associates, Inc.

Geist Picture Interest Inventory
Western Psychological Services

Personality Tests

Test of Social Insight
Martin M. Bruce, Publishers

Social and Prevocational Information Battery
CTB/McGraw-Hill

Work Environment Preference Schedule
Psychological Corporation

Adaptability Test
Science Research Associates, Inc.

Thurstone Test of Mental Alertness
Science Research Associates, Inc.

Scott Mental Alertness Test
Stoelting

Vocational Tests

Business Judgment Test
Martin M. Bruce, Publishers

Minnesota Clerical Test
Psychological Corporation

Computer Programmer Aptitude Battery
Science Research Associates

Computer Operator Aptitude Battery
Science Research Associates

SRA Test of Mechanical Concepts
Science Research Associates

SRA Mechnical Aptitudes
Science Research Associates

Purdue Non-language Personnel Test
University Bookstore, West Lafayette, Indiana

Purdue Mechanical Adaptability Test
University Bookstore, West Lafayette, Indiana

Purdue Industrial Mathematics Test
University Bookstore, West Lafayette, Indiana

Purdue Clerical Adaptability Test
University Bookstore, West Lafayette, Indiana

Publishers:

American Guidance Service, Inc.
Publisher's Building
Circle Pines, Minnesota 55014

American Printing House for the Blind
1839 Frankfort Avenue
P.O. Box 6085
Louisville, Kentucky 40206

Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing Company
4300 West 62nd Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206

Martin M. Bruce, Publishers
Box 228
340 Oxford Road
New Rochelle, New York 10804

Bureau of Educational Research and Services
C-20 East Mall
University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa 52242

Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc.
577 College Avenue
P.O. Box 11636
Palo Alto, California 94306

CTB/McGraw Hill
Del Monte Research Park
Monterey, California 93940

Educational and Industrial Testing Service
P.O. Box 7234
San Diego, California 92107

Ohio State University
The Nisonger Center
1580 Cannon Drive
Columbus, Ohio 43210

Psychological Corporation
757 Third Avenue
New York, New York 10017

Psychologists and Educators, Inc.
Sales Division, Suite 212
211 West State Street
Jacksonville, Illinois 62650

Science Research Associates, Inc.
259 East Erie
Chicago, Illinois 60611

Stoelting
1350 South Kostner Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60623

University Bookstore
360 State Street
West Lafayette, Indiana 47906

Western Psychological Services
Order Department
12031 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90025

ERIC © CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGES
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

FEB 17 1984

8118 Math-Sciences Building
Los Angeles, California 90024